



Heart Centered
EARLY LEARNING

Parent Handbook

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Our Vision

Our vision is to create a learning center that promotes communication and community. We aim to achieve this by building a strong sense of self and relationships among community members and within our preschool family.

Our Mission

Our mission is to foster a love of learning in preschoolers and provide opportunities for them to experience the world around them while making a lasting impact on the community. Preschoolers will leave with a developing foundation of social and emotional intelligence and Kindergarten readiness skills. Our learning center will offer whole-family support through discussion groups, classes, and community-building events.

Our Approach to Learning

We are a play and discovery-based learning community that believes in the whole-child approach. As children's perception of the world grows, they begin to work on cooperation, problem-solving, and 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 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. 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 old and able to use the bathroom independently. Children must be three years old to enroll.

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

Before your child's first day of school, you must turn in these required forms:

1. Tuition Contract
2. Completed Immunization Record
3. Family Questionnaire
4. Handbook Acknowledgement

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 next month. Please come to us if you are experiencing a financial emergency. You will forfeit 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:

Please give us notice by February 1st to disenroll for July and August. Your child may return to the program in September; payment for September's tuition is due August 15. Late payments without communication may result in your child's spot going to the next family on the waitlist.

If you give us notice **after** February 1st, your child will be 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 one becomes available.

Late Fees

All late tuition payments will incur a \$30 late fee, which will be included in the following month's bill. Late pick-ups may also result in a \$20 late fee. 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 each year. We will observe two weeks off during summer. Those vacations will be listed on our calendar giving families ample notice. We will always attempt to find a qualified substitute before closing the preschool for personal emergencies or illness.

Emergency Closures/Increment Weather

HCEL may close when the Everett School District closes due to inclement weather. There may be instances where we choose not to close when the Everett School District closes. This decision is at the discretion of the owner. Our road is not plowed when it snows; it 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 year, 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 of 100.4, 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 due to illness. 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 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 if you plan to stay for an extended time. We do not discourage unannounced visitors. It would work best if we could prepare preschoolers, including parent volunteers or visitors, for 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. There are strict guidelines about guns and smoking, and we always abide by all regulations.

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 the other child's right to privacy.

Social Media

We are a preschool community, and we ask that everyone refrain from sharing information about HCEL, staff, 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
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 Kits/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

We require 30 days' notice if you are withdrawing from care. There will be no refunds due to early withdrawal or termination of care.

We reserve the right to withdraw families from care for nonpayment, excessive late pick-ups, and 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 7:55 am and close promptly at 3:30 pm Monday through Thursday. Late fees will be assessed at 3:40 pm. We want to create and maintain a morning routine; ideally, all preschoolers arrive by 9:30. 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. If you need to come later in the morning and that’s your routine, let me know so I can plan for your preschooler’s late arrival.

Upon arrival, parents will use the QR code on the parent board to sign their child in. Anyone who picks up or drops off their child regularly must have the app on their phone to do this. 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 that are 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, which will be sent out at the beginning of the month through Brightwheel. 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 will occur during mealtimes. 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 needs 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 if anything needs immediate attention and email us with any questions.

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

Conferences

Conferences are held on the last Friday of 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 about an hour and a half 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 peaceful 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 the group. It is

usual for preschoolers' nightly routine to go through some changes as they settle into the new daily routine of preschool.

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 children'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 establish structure and consistency as the teacher and families partner to support the preschoolers while transitioning into our learning community.

In rare, extreme cases, staff may need to restrain a child. This will be done appropriately according to the child's developmental level, abilities, and language skills. It would only be done in extreme situations where a child's safety is in danger. It 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 accommodation is 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 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, the situation remains unsafe, or we are not able to meet the needs of a preschooler.

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 participating in community-building events at our preschool and the larger community. We wish this program to reach beyond our classroom walls and be of service to the larger community.

Brightwheel App

Parents will be invited to join our classroom on the Brightwheel App upon enrollment. This is a requirement for all families. This app is required to sign your preschoolers in and out of the school; it is how you will receive classroom communication, such as notices, messages, and pictures. Through the app, you will make tuition payments, have access to monthly invoices, and download tax forms at the end of the year. Brightwheel is a widely used platform across the nation. I will do my best to help troubleshoot issues as they come up, but you may need to contact Brightwheel for technical assistance regarding the app on your phone. Any relatives or family members who drop off or pick up children must also get the app. They will not have access to anything other than that feature. Signing your preschoolers in and out is a licensing requirement, and by following this procedure, you are keeping us in compliance.



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 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 through the Brightwheel app.

_____ 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.

_____ Please acknowledge we do not currently carry Liability Insurance. We will inform you if this changes.

Parent/Guardian Name

Signature & Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Signature & Date

Date Collected by Staff:

