Parent Handbook
2020-2021

4605 N. La Cholla Boulevard
Tucson, AZ 85705
520.696.8909
DIRECTOR
EMILY MESCHTER EARLY LEARNING CENTER & EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

Dr. Susan Shinn, Director

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The Child Care & Preschool Teacher Poem

Although I am not their parent,
   I care for them each day.
   I cuddle, sing, & read to them
   And watch them as they play.
I see each new accomplishment
   And help them grow and learn.
They come to me for comfort.
   I soothe away their tears.
They proudly show their work to me.
   I give the loudest cheers.
No, I am not their parent,
But my role is just as strong.
I know some day the time will come,
   When we may have to part.
But I know each child I have cared for,
   Is forever in my heart.

-Author Unknown
Emily Meschter Early Learning Center
4605 N. La Cholla Blvd.
Tucson, Arizona 85705
Phone 520-696-8909

Dear Parents

We are so excited to be able to offer our Preschool program at Emily Meschter Early Learning Center. We are looking forward to a wonderful year with your child either in-person or remotely.

Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is proud to be recognized as a Five Star school by First Things First: Quality First Star Rating, accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and AdvancEd for Early Learning Programs. We believe each of these rigorous assessments provide guidance and accountability to hold the staff to greatness in support of young children.

The following information should be beneficial to you now and throughout the year. Please read this booklet and keep it as a reference. As a staff, we recognize that the family and home are the first and most significant influence in your child’s life. It is our hope to collaborate with the family to see that the child is provided with the best possible education. We will be keeping in close contact with you throughout the year by using daily conversations, monthly newsletters, Facebook, website, Parent/Teacher Virtual Conferences. Any time you have any questions or concerns, please call the school and leave a message. We will return your call as soon as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation and support!

Sincerely,

Susan Shinn, Ed.D.
Director of Emily Meschter Early Learning Center
Flowing Wells School District
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PHILOSOPHY

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to the education of the whole child by providing learning activities that are developmentally appropriate in a stimulating, challenging and creative environment. The school believes that inclusive practices and education is vital to all children’s development. During the first few years of a child’s life the brain is growing and developing at an amazing rate. All children need to be exposed to a variety of quality experiences that are crucial to early childhood development.

Our center offers a “hands-on” approach to learning! This approach is designed to foster creativity and expand self-expression...as a child’s work is play! EMELC teachers show their respect for children by encouraging them to think for themselves, make decisions, and resolve their problems independently, as well as express their own ideas and feelings. The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center strongly believes that families are vital to a child’s development. All families are encouraged to participate in various preschool activities including celebrations, caregiver-child evening events and volunteering in/out of the classroom.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

- Each child progresses at a unique rate, has an individual learning style and possesses diverse abilities.
- Young children learn through active exploration of their environment where there is a balance between self-discovery and adult initiated/selected activities.
- A child’s learning is based on prior knowledge and experiences that are constructed through play, social interactions with other children, and consistent experiences guided by nurturing adults.
- Optimal learning occurs in environments where the adult is respectful of the child, the family, the language, the culture, and the community.
- A child’s progress is best understood through observable behavioral change using ongoing observation, anecdotal recordkeeping, and collection of the child’s work.
- Children develop a sense of empowerment by having many opportunities to make choices within their daily routines.
- Children learn best when their health and nutritional needs are met.
- Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children.
- Young children are capable and competent regardless of their backgrounds, their experiences and their varying abilities.

The Arizona Early Learning Standards is not a curriculum but it provides the expectations for teachers of young children in the state. It provides a framework and indicators of high-
quality teaching practices that will support and enhance the development of the learning outcomes for students and are not intended for use as a checklist. The document presents standards for working with the home, school, and community; for creating and sustaining the learning environment; and for identifying and using appropriate assessment tools and practices. The areas essential to a high-quality program and that both support and facilitate teaching and learning in Social/Emotional Development, Physical Development/Health and Safety, Language Arts/Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Approaches to Learning and Fine Arts.

This is an accredited program through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and AdvancED for Early Learning. You can expect to see:

- Planned learning activities and materials appropriate to children’s age and sensitive to their individual characteristics,
- Frequent, positive, and warm interactions among adults and children,
- A healthy and safe environment for children and staff,
- Enough adults to respond to individual children,
- Regular communication with parents,
- Nutritious snacks and meals,
- A nurturing environment that supports each child’s growth.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center has three program options:

**The Preschool Income-Based program (PIP)** is for children who reside in the Flowing Wells School District. The children must be three to five years old, and meet income eligibility requirements. This program is funded through First Things First Scholarships. The program is a three hours a day, four days a week and provides transportation.

There is a waitlist for these programs which will be shared with other Preschool Development sites.

**LINKS (Learning, Intervention and Kid Supports)** is a program for children three to five years old who have been evaluated, and determined eligible for special education services. The children attend school three hours a day, four days a week and the program is funded through IDEA.

**STEP (Staff Tuition and Enrichment Program)** is for children who have a relative that works in the Flowing Wells School District. The STEP program is five days a week.

As our in-person classroom fill up, all students learning will be supported through our virtual classroom.
INCLUSION OPPORTUNITIES

Emily Meschter Early Learning Program believes in including children with disabilities. Students with differing abilities are integrated with children of their own age. Staff encourages and supports families to make decisions about the services that their child may need, and they encourage families to advocate obtaining needed services. Diversity is valued and encouraged at the school.

FEE FOR SERVICE

The Preschool Income-based Program is four days a week. The student must reside in Flowing Wells School District and meet the income eligibility guidelines. There is not a cost for this program.

The STEP program has a fee of nineteen dollars per day for a full day, five days a week program. In order to enroll, a student must have a family member who is currently employed in the school district.

The Refund policy is as follows: There are NO refunds. We will only provide a refund if the family has paid the five-dollar registration fee and then chooses to withdraw from the program before it begins.

SIGN IN/SIGN OUT

Parents must sign a form at school each day indicating what time their child arrives to and departs from the center. Students who ride the bus will be signed in/out by preschool staff.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is available for all students who live within the Flowing Wells district boundaries, if they are attending the half-day program. Students utilizing district transportation must fill out the appropriate paperwork at the time of registration. Once service begins, each student is to be met on time, by an adult as the bus arrives and departs. Authorized school staff members will always escort the children from the bus. Transportation will only be provided within district boundaries.

CHILD ACCESS

Schools are responsible for ensuring the safety of all children attending that school. For their own protection, children will only be released to their legal guardians or to another person with the guardian’s written permission. Names of people permitted to pick up a child must be listed on the child’s registration form.
CORE PRINCIPLES OF PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

A program of integrated, exploratory activities meets the developmental needs of each Preschool child. Because young children learn through rich and varied play, an important time of the day is activity/free-play time, when each child chooses from areas such as blocks, dramatic play, art, books, manipulative materials, drawing/writing center, water/sand play and group activities such as cooking or planting. Each group has an active play period on the playground as well as several group times for story, snack, music and movement and discussions. The curriculum for preschoolers is centered on supporting children’s social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development. Some key elements and examples are listed below:

- Social/emotional development
- Cognitive development
- Build strong, trusting relationships between children, parents and teachers
- Provide a physically and emotionally safe and responsive environment
- Support children in positive problem solving/conflict resolution
- Support greater independence, responsibility and choice
- Implement daily routines to give children a sense of predictability and security
- Acknowledge and label children’s feelings

Physical development:
- Provide abundant opportunities for gross motor play and exploration, both indoors and out
- Provide a variety of activities and materials to challenge and strengthen fine motor skills
- Challenge children with physical problem-solving activities during Music and Movement

Language development:
- Increase children’s vocabulary through stories, songs, thematic studies, group discussions
- Provide opportunities to play with language through rhyming, word games and stories

CURRICULUM

The following is required to ensure curricular approaches are used that meet the individual and developmental needs of children while providing them with intentionally designed instruction and activities. *Exploratory Map for the Inclusive Learning Year (2019-2020)* is a curriculum, which has been developed by Dr. Susan Shinn with support from Ms. Jessica
Caramella. This dynamic curriculum addresses all areas of young children's development with differentiated outcomes embedded in the content so that all children can learn at their own levels. Students will be able to experience growth and mastery at their own pace. The scope and sequence of this curriculum provides teachers with whole and small group instruction, individualized free-exploration, and an abundance of scaffolding opportunities. The curriculum has an over-arching focus on math/science and language/literacy development.

For example, many teachers have found that use of this curriculum has led to higher levels of literacy that inspired authorship of outstanding and insightful stories for young children. This "Exploratory Map" is grounded in the experience of highly qualified teachers who developed the content. Many of the activities were adapted from the rich literature of skilled children's authors and from:


The curriculum and teaching principles promote learning and development in the following domains: social and emotional, language and literacy, cognitive and physical. It aligns clearly and with the full content of the Arizona Early Learning Standards. The curriculum further incorporates ongoing assessment Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) to determine instructional needs. The lesson plans are in place, and are aligned with the AZ Early Learning Standards and clearly demonstrate meeting the specific needs of children.

Your child’s classroom teacher will share the curriculum with each family during the fall Open House. Then he/she will send home a weekly newsletter, indicating the components of the weekly lesson(s). Please take the opportunity to review the curriculum during the year by making an appointment with the director.

**DAILY SCHEDULES**

The following are some of the activities is a sample of your preschooler’s day.

**Free Exploration**
Providing children with opportunities to play is an event that supports all areas of development. Research has shown that as children play they exercise their skills and this is how they learn best. In play-based classrooms, children "learn how to learn" through their environment.

**Whole Group Time**
Circle time is a planned time during the children's daily schedule. This is a time when children come together with each other and an adult. It encourages community, communication and develops a variety of skills.
Small Group Time
This is an opportunity for children to engage in a more in-depth study of the daily focus. A variety of activities are presented to the children in order for them to process information and gain a deeper understanding for key concepts.

Outdoor Play
This is a time for students to focus on their gross motor skills (use of the large muscles in your child’s body such as running, jumping or crawling), although this time is also for children to develop their ability to engage with group games and to grow their social and emotional skills.

Snack
This is a time to learn about healthy foods, nutrition, food textures and table manners. This time is also used to develop language skills, fine motor skills, and appropriate social interactions.

Clean Up
Clean up entails children learning how to pick up their toys, problem solve and learn cooperation.

Movement and Music
Most children love this part of the day. Rhythm and rhyme are learned through the use of finger plays, musical games and songs with motions.

Story
Story time gives children a chance to relax and develop language and listening skills.

COMMUNICATION

Families at Emily Meschter Early Learning Center will receive a handbook each year, in English or Spanish, which will identify policies and procedure for the current school year. Families will also receive a monthly newsletter from your teacher, which will also be posted on our website. If you have concerns about your child, please contact your child’s teacher or the director.

HOME VISITATION/CONFERENCES

Our center believes that having conversations with parents is an important way to support a young child’s growth and development. Two times during the school year, the center will offer families the opportunity to visit with their teacher to discuss their child’s development (Fall/Spring). These visits can take place at school or virtually. Of course, all families are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher anytime during the year.
ASSESSMENT/PROGRESS MONITORING

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to promoting and ensuring school readiness. We work closely with the Arizona Department of Education Early Childhood Division, Arizona Department of Health Services, First Things First, and are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Childhood and AdvancED Early Learning. We believe that progress monitoring needs to recognize all children as individuals with their own unique strengths and challenges. Families and teachers need to know how children are progressing, and if there are any difficulties that they may encounter with learning. This information will support good decisions, and develop programming that facilitates developmentally appropriate skills for each child. Our curriculum goals and objectives align with our assessment of child progress and develop programming to facilitate developmentally appropriate skills for each child. If there any concerns arise about the child’s development, the family will be notified and a Comprehensive Developmental Assessment will be implemented.

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center believes that all progress monitoring needs to recognize children as individuals with their own unique strengths and challenges. By understanding this, we have determined that Teaching Strategies GOLD is an assessment tool that will fulfill this belief. Three times per year, (September, February, and May); you will receive an update of your child’s progress. Our center will also continue to use a developmental checklist to determine progress of readiness skills at the beginning and the end of the school year.

Guidelines for Assessment Procedures and Purpose

Purposes of Assessment

- Program Planning
- Progress Monitoring
- Program Evaluation
- Identifying a child’s interest and needs.
- Developmental Screening
- Eligibility Determination for Special Education Services
- Identifying a child’s strengths/weakness

Formative assessment activities will be used to inform individualized instruction and program improvement and will include:
Observations and anecdotal notes;
Collecting work samples; and
Gathering family input.

All information for assessments are confidential.

CHILD SCREENINGS

Early identification of children with special needs ensures that young children receive the services and supports necessary to maximize their opportunities for healthy development and learning. The school districts are required by statute to “…identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities within their geographic boundaries who are in need of special education and related services” (§300.111 Child Find). EMELC coordinates their child screenings with Arizona Early Intervention Services and other coordinating services such as DDD and Easter Seals Foundation two times per month. Screening activities are a first step in the identification process. Therefore, it is imperative that a screening procedure be in place to ensure children are identified and receive the supports they need. Emily Meschter Early Learning Center uses parent report and the DIAL-R as their screening tools.

All children participating will receive a sensory (hearing and vision) screening within the first 45 calendar days of the first day of attendance in the program. Hearing and vision screening performed on children must be conducted by those who have been trained to administer screening instruments. If no such person is available at the program, outside resources must be contracted with to conduct these screenings.

The developmental screening should:

- Take place in the context of the children’s daily activities and routines
- Incorporate parental input
- Follow up referrals and activities that are initiated to secure appropriate services will be documented and tracked to ensure that families receive the information and/or services necessary. Community partners will work in partnership with the LEA to ensure coordinated and seamless efforts are maintained.

If you would like your children to be screened for a developmental delay or do not wish for your child to be screened for vision and hearing, please call the health office at 696-8910.

According to the Arizona Education Laws and Rules:

“Full and individual evaluation” means procedures used in accordance with the IDEA to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. This evaluation includes:
- A review of existing information about the child;
- A decision regarding the need for additional information;
If necessary, the collection of additional information; and
A review of all information about the child and a determination of eligibility for special education services and needs of the child. (AAC. R7-2-401.B.12)

The initial evaluation of a child being considered for special education, or the re-evaluation per a parental request of a student already receiving special education services, shall be completed as soon as possible, but shall not exceed 60 calendar days from receipt of informed written consent to evaluate. If the public education agency (PEA) initiates the evaluation, the 60-day period shall commence with the date of receipt of informed written consent and shall conclude with the date of the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) determination of eligibility. (AAC. R7-2-401.E.3)

If a parent requests the evaluation and the MET concurs, the 60 day period shall commence with the date that the written parental request was received by the public education agency and shall conclude with the date of the Met determination of eligibility. (AAC. R7-2-401.E.3).

The 60-day evaluation period may be extended for an additional 30 days, provided it is in the best interest of the child, and the parents and PEA agree in writing to such an extension. Neither the 60 day evaluation period nor any extension shall cause a re-evaluation to exceed the timelines for a re-evaluation within three years of the previous evaluation (AAC. R7-2-401.E.4).

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Please let us know if your child has special concerns that we may not know about, such as strong likes or dislikes, fears, allergies etc. It is best to put these things in writing so that we can easily refer to them. Also, it is important for us to know of family changes or any other significant changes that occur. These things greatly affect a preschooler’s behavior and knowing about them helps us to better care for your child’s needs. This information can be told to us in confidence.

DRESS CODE

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that is suitable for an active and “messy” activity. Also, please have your child dressed for the environmental conditions that occur during the day so they can enjoy all of our outside activities. Our staff is dedicated to providing your child with positive experiences throughout his/her preschool day. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to your child’s teacher or the program director.

MESSY, MESSY, MESSY

Preschoolers learn by playing and exploring, therefore plan on sending your child to school wearing clothes that can get dirty without you getting upset about it! We play in the water table, finger paint, dig in muddy sand, and play in “obleck” (cornstarch & water). We have a LIMITED supply of clothing for emergency use, such as “accidents” or torn seams. If your child should come home wearing an item provided by his/her teacher, please wash and return them to school.
HELping Your Child at Home

- Talk about school as a pleasant and happy experience.
- Reassure your child by telling him/her what he/she will be doing and what it will be like to be at school.
- Help your child learn his/her teachers’ names and refer to them by name, instead of “your teacher.” At our center we address adults as Miss/Mr and then their first name. Such as Mr. Steve or Miss Tammy.
- Display your child’s work and creations in your home.
- Encourage the use of common manners: i.e., please, thank you, I’m sorry, excuse me.
- Encourage your child to share his/her preschool experiences, but do not be alarmed if your child cannot answer, “tell me about your day?” immediately following school.
- Put your cell phone away…spend quality time talking and playing with your child.

Registration information

Parents must complete a registration packet prior to their child’s attendance in preschool. The Emily Meschter Early Learning Program (696-8909) may be contacted for general information or to obtain a packet. In addition to the packet, parents will need to provide:

- The original or certified copy of their child’s birth certificate.
- Proof of residency.
- Proof of their child’s immunizations.
- Verification of income for some of our programs.

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center has a waitlist for those who would like to participate in EMELC’s preschool programs. For information regarding the wait list or to place your child on this list, please contact the front office at 696-8909. Please note that there are specific eligibility requirements for each program.

Withdrawal from the Program

Parents may withdraw their child (ren) from the preschool program at any time but are encouraged to notify the staff when the child will be leaving.

Children who are absent from their class for ten (10) consecutive days will be dropped from the program. Every attempt will be made to contact parents before such action is taken.
DISCIPLINE POLICY

Positive discipline encourages good behavior and helps build a child’s self-esteem. This includes statements noticing good/desired behavior, as well as encouraging and praising a child for his/her work and effort. If a behavior continues, the teaching staff will assess the function of the child’s behavior.

Discipline is consistent among the staff and is considerate of the child’s age, his/her stage of development, and the immediate situation. After warnings, common methods for dealing with problems include:

- The child is redirected to something more appropriate.
- The problem and alternative solutions are discussed with the child and then he/she is "guided" through an appropriate behavior.
- If a child needs time to settle down and regain control before redirection or discussion can take place, he/she is provided a safe environment to gain control.
- For children with persistent, serious, challenging behavior, teachers, families, and other professionals work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child’s inclusion and success in the preschool environment.

Discipline never involves physical punishment or psychological abuse. Staff will never use threats or derogatory remarks or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

This program will not suspend or expel children.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If your child requires special accommodations, please contact the Program Director.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

In compliance with state regulations, Emily Meschter Early Learning Center maintains current liability insurance. Evidence of this insurance policy is on file in the director’s office.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Emily Meschter Early Learning Center operates Monday through Thursday from 7:15 am to 4:00 pm. On Friday’s, the center operates from 7:15 am– 4:00 pm. Most of our students attend a half-day session, four days a week, depending on their age and/or special education needs. The morning session is from 8:30 am to 11:30 am and the afternoon session is from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm. Virtual learning will be provided for one hour, five days a week.

The preschool will observe all school holidays in accordance with the school district calendar which is in this handbook and posted on the district website. During the school year, there are also several early release days, based on the elementary school calendar.
CLASSROOM VISITATION/VOLUNTEER

At this time, EMELC is not allowing parents or volunteers to be in the center due to COVID-19.

During most years, parents are always a welcome addition to the classroom. On days when parents are coming to observe or participate, we ask that the parents sign in at the front office. T

CONFIDENTIALITY

To protect the privacy of children and their families, we follow strict confidentiality laws. We do not release the names, ages, disabilities, or other personal information without written permission. Parents are expected to adhere to this policy. Please respect the privacy of the other families by only discussing and sharing information about your own child. Child files are locked and medical files are locked in the health office.

EQUIP TEAM

The team reviews and recommends changes in philosophy of the program. It keeps the teaching staff aware of community resources and helps to promote the preschool program. The committee is involved in reviewing parent evaluations and making recommendations based on the evaluations. If you are interested in joining the advisory committee, please contact the director.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Your child will not need a backpack to carry things back and forth to school each day. We are requesting that your child only brings items on Monday's for the entire week.

Please keep a change of your child’s clothes for us to keep at school in case of an accident. Please put your child’s name on them.

If your child is wearing diapers or pull-ups, please make sure to send extras in a plastic bag at the beginning of each week. We also need for you to send in a box of wipes so that we can leave it in our changing room area. Please put your child’s name on them.

ATTENDANCE

Your child’s attendance is very important and we ask that your child attend school regularly and arrive and be picked up on time. When your child is unable to attend school, please call the preschool at 696-8909 and report the absence. After 10 days of continued absence, your child will no longer be enrolled at school.

Please call the Transportation office at 696-8870 if your child will not need bus service due to absence.
ACCIDENTS, INJURIES, AND ILLNESS

Although the program makes every effort to ensure the safety of your child, from time to time minor accidents and illness may occur. In the event of a minor injury, your child will be sent to the health office for treatment and the injury will be logged into a master file. If your child has a known medical or developmental condition an individual emergency care plan may be required.

In case of a serious injury or illness, we will make every effort to contact you for instructions. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the person you have indicated on the emergency data card to make necessary medical emergency decisions. Please keep your emergency data updated on all enrollment forms. Your signed emergency medical release will also assist us in getting prompt medical assistance. A program employee will stay with your child until your arrival.

There is staff at the center who is CPR and Pediatric First Aid certified.

In the interest of maintaining a healthy school environment, please keep your child at home if he/she is ill or having any signs of COVID-19. The following symptoms indicate the need to be kept out of school: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, elevated temperature, chills, red or inflamed eyes, cold symptoms, skin rash, headaches and other pains. Your child is to be free of fever for seventy-two (72) hours, without medication, before returning to school.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, he/she will be sent to the nurse’s office and remain there until a parent or authorized adult arrives for pick-up. It is important that we have updated emergency contact information on file.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASE

It is imperative that you notify us if your child contracts a contagious disease (as defined by the Pima County Health Department). We will notify all preschool parents, in writing, of the possible exposure to a contagious disease.

MEDICATION

The school nurse is not allowed to dispense any medication without your doctor’s directions and parent approval. Student medication must be stored in the nurse’s office and students
needing medication must report to the nurse. Medication must be in the prescription bottle, and must include the child’s name, etc. An authorization form must be completed by the parent prior to dispensation of medication. Please contact Ms. Genesis Guerrero at 696-8910.

**TRANSITIONS**
**Transitions from Home to School**

EMELC is committed to developmentally appropriate practice. Children are especially susceptible to changes in routine, new environments and to separation from their parents or guardians. It is particularly difficult for children to be placed into the care of someone with whom they are not familiar.

Entering a new situation (e.g., a new classroom and a new teacher) can be a stressful time and some points of transition can be especially hard due to a variety of circumstances. Rapid change can lead to insecurity and stress. Children under stress may become withdrawn and unresponsive or demonstrate inappropriate behavior. Both extremes can inhibit learning. It is therefore the aim of this policy to:

- Promote the smooth transition of children at the start of each new setting. Prevent and alleviate stress
- Promote continuity of teaching and learning.

During most times, the following activities will be offered to you and your child **before** he/she begins their journey into the environment:

- Your child will have the opportunity to visit the classroom and teacher before his/her first day of school.

Although, during the COVID-19 pandemic this action will not be implemented.

Some things that you can do to support your child during this time of transition would be to:

- Come visit the school, play on the playground to familiarize your child with his/her new setting.
- Read a story about “going to school”.
- Talk with your child about what school will be like for them, the friends that they will make, and the activities that they will be engaged in.

**Transitions within the Program**

We use careful planning and considerations when planning transitions within the school environment. When children have settled into the familiarity of the routine, children will be more cooperative through each transition of the day. Some transitions in the classroom include:

- Clean-up
- Coming to circle
- Leaving circle
• Washing hands/meals
• Going outside
• Coming inside
• Going from here to there
• Going to relaxing and resting
• Waking up from rest

Some ways that are child's teacher makes transitions in the classrooms more successful:

• Engage child in a choice activity.
• Sing a song.
• Use a puppet.
• Have a contest

Sometimes students transition to a new classroom to support inclusive practices. If this happens, a meeting with convene to discuss with you the reasons for the transition, two weeks before the transition happens. Your child will initially be introduced to the new classroom, along with a familiar teaching staff. They will increase their time in the “new” classroom, until the student is familiar with the new staff, students, and schedule.

Transitions Exiting from the Program

Their families and the staff support children who exit from the Emily Meschter Early Learning Center. When a family notifies the program that a child is withdrawing, within one week the teacher will update current assessment of the child's developmental progress for the family to share with the new program. As part of ensuring effective collaborations with the community, and providing children and families with a seamless transition the center will:

• Have parents who have given a notice of their child is being withdrawn from the program will be able to pick up all of their children’s work samples on his/her last day of school.

• Have teachers will make sure the child does not leave any of their belongings behind including art projects and program materials.

• Have teachers and children will create a “goodbye card” for the child who is exiting the program.

At times families have to exit their children immediately from the program or are absent for 5 consecutive days without any contact, if this occurs:

Teachers will gather all of child’s work samples, and belongings that were left behind and leave them at the front desk for a week or until their parents pick them up, whichever comes first.
Transition to Kindergarten

Some of the activities that support our student's transition into kindergarten successfully include:

- Development of a summer calendar to support kindergarten activities.
- Each family is provided information about Kindergarten Round Up/Registration
- Kindergarten parents attend an orientation discussing kindergarten.
- Preschool teachers will discuss kindergarten expectations with their students.
- Preschool teachers will read books about going to kindergarten.

SCHOOL POLICIES

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to our children’s health. We recognize the importance of staff as positive role models for children as they learn to live healthy lives. Research has indicated that the child care setting is a strong predictor of young children’s physical activity levels and likelihood to model physical activity levels and likelihood to model healthy habits.

In our efforts to promote physical activity, we will follow these guidelines:

- Daily physical activity will be planned and provided for a three hour program:
  - Staff will include up to 30 minutes per day in curriculum for physical activity.
  - 15 minutes of the 30 minutes will be teacher-led and 15 minutes will be free-play.
  - Staff will encourage moderate and vigorous levels of physical activity.
  - Sedentary time will be limited to fewer than 30 minutes at a time, except when sleeping.
  - Screen time will be limited to one hour or fewer per week, staff will provide no more than one hour of screen time per week, unless screen time engages children in physical activity or is used for educational purposes.

Physical activity will never be used or withheld as a punishment.

SUN SAFETY

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to protecting the health and safety of students and staff. While we like to provide opportunities for outdoor physical activity, we also want to make it sun safe. Well-defined research has documented a multitude of negative health conditions from overexposure to the sun.

Staff will encourage parents to apply sunscreen before the students arrives at school, school employees will not be allowed to apply sunscreen to students. Families will be encouraged to:

- Use sunscreen, lip balm, hats, sunglasses, light clothing and shade.
- Limiting exposure during peak UV times, from 10 am to 4 pm.
• Regularly checking the UV Index to monitor the intensity of the sun’s rays and plan for outdoor activities accordingly.

BREASTFEEDING

Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers. Research has documented a multitude of health benefits to both the mother and infant when the infant is breastfed. The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center will adhere to the following guidelines:

• Breastfeeding mothers and employees shall be provided a private and sanitary place to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area will have an electrical outlet and nearby access to running water.

• A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breast milk. Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the child care facility’s refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled.

CACFP

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center recognizes the importance of affordable child care while also providing quality nutrition to low-income families. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) helps Arizona child care facilities improve and maintain the health and nutritional status of children while promoting the development of good eating habits. CACFP also cuts costs of care for low-income families. Emily Meschter Early Learning Center will explore the CACFP program and check eligibility by:
• Having the director of the facility or designated staff visit the CACFP website: www.azed.gov
• Having the director of the facility or designated staff call CACFP at 1-800-352-4558 to determine if this program is a good fit for the facility.

FRUIT JUICE

Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to supporting your child in establishing lifelong healthy eating and drinking habits. Too much juice may be linked to weight problems and is associated with tooth decay and decreased appetite for other nutritious foods. Too much juice may also take the place of more nutritious beverages such as fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk or water. In keeping with this philosophy, our facility will serve limited amounts of fruit juice. Water or milk shall be used as the first choice for thirst and will be offered throughout the day.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to supporting your child in establishing lifelong healthy eating and drinking habits. We also understand that some children may be
allergic to certain food products. If your child is allergic to food products, please let your teacher and Ms. Genesis know about this condition.

FAMILY-STYLE MEALS

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to supporting your child in establishing lifelong habits of healthy eating patterns. In keeping with this philosophy, our facility will:

Serve meals family-style whenever possible to support children in learning to serve themselves and develop healthy relationships with food. Our role as caregivers is to provide nourishing food. The child’s role is to decide whether and how much to eat. We will never force a child to eat.

CHOKING HAZARD

Some foods can cause choking. Keep foods such as grapes, hot dogs, raw carrots, or peanuts away from babies and young children. Cut food for babies and young children into pieces no larger than one-half inch. Encourage children to chew food well. Supervise meal times. Insist that children sit down while eating. Children should never run, walk, play, or lie down with food in their mouths. Be aware of older children's actions. Many choking incidents are caused when an older child gives a dangerous toy or food to a younger child.

Keep the following foods away from children younger than 4 years:

- Hard or sticky candy
- Popcorn
- Chunks of meat

STUDENT ACCESS TO MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

During the preschool years, young children are developing a sense of initiative and creativity. They are curious about the world around them and about learning. They are exploring their ability to create and communicate using a variety of media (crayons, felt-tip markers, paints and other art materials, blocks, dramatic play materials, miniature life figures) and through creative movement, singing, dancing, and using their bodies to represent ideas and experiences. Digital technologies provide one more outlet for them to demonstrate their creativity and learning although it should not be assessable to children for more than one hour per day.

ORAL HEALTH

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to protecting the health and safety of our students and staff in regards to tooth decay, which is an infectious disease and a serious problem among young children in Arizona. Our facility recognizes that we play an important role in preventing tooth decay and in educating children, their families and staff on tooth decay prevention. In keeping with this philosophy, our facility will provide oral
health education, and guide our staff members on steps they can take to prevent tooth decay according to the age appropriate guidelines in the Empower Guidebook. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the students will not be brushing their teeth at school.

**STAFF TRAINING**

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to furthering staff knowledge on the Empower Program topic areas including: physical activity, nutrition, oral health and tobacco. In keeping with this philosophy, our facility will make sure that our staff receives or attends 18 hours of training annually on early childhood care topics. Staff is also expected to take four of the Early Learning Modules through ADE Connect, in addition to having 18 hours of professional development each year.

**ASHLine**

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to supporting the efforts of the Arizona Smokers’ Helpline (ASHLine) to help staff and parents quit tobacco. In keeping with this philosophy and to protect the health of our children, their families and our staff, our facility will promote the ASHLine information on the dangers of second and third-hand smoke by placing them in a visible spot at least once per year so parents and staff can see them. We will also refer parents, when possible, to ASHLine.

**SMOKE FREE CAMPUS**

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to providing a smoke-free environment for children and staff due to acknowledged hazards from exposure to second-hand smoke. In keeping with this philosophy, our facility will notify all employees, families and visitors of the smoke-free policy. Appropriate signage will be posted.

**WEAPON FREE CAMPUS**

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to providing a weapon-free environment for children and staff. Weapons are known to be “accidental” killers of young children and do not have a place on an early learning campus.

**CELL PHONE FREE CAMPUS**

The Emily Meschter Early Learning Center is committed to providing limited cell phone use on their campus. We encourage you to put your cell phone away when you are with your child. Engage in conversation as you say hello and goodbye to him/her. This will increase your child’s self-esteem and develop a healthy relationship between both of you.

**WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSURES:**

If Flowing Wells School District is closed due to emergency and/or weather conditions, the preschool will also be closed.
REGULATING AGENCY

The Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Child Care Licensure regulates this facility. Information from this agency may be obtained by writing to:

Arizona Department of Health Services
Office of Child Care Licensure
400 West Congress, Suite 100
Tucson, Arizona 85701
or by calling: (520) 628-6540.

REFERRALS TO DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY

Child abuse and neglect are against the law. We are REQUIRED by state law to report any and all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICE

Department of Health Services licensure reports are kept on file and available upon request.

TELEPHONE AUTHORIZATION PROCEDURE

In the event that a parent requests the release of his/her child to a designated individual via telephone, the following procedure will be used:

- Parent will identify him/herself by name and unique child identification.
- Parent will inform the designated individual that a picture identification will be required prior to student release.
- Program staff will verify identification of designated individual.
- Designated individual will be listed on the child’s registration form.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER: 690-2368; Provides social services and referrals/information for Flowing Wells residents.

TUCSON ASSOCIATION FOR CHILD CARE, INC.: 881-8940; Offers referral services and general information for child care resources in Tucson.

OUR TOWN FAMILY CENTER: Admin. 323-1708; Crisis Service 323-1706; Crisis intervention for families, family counseling and parent classes (services on a sliding scale).
**THE PARENT CONNECTION:** 321-1500; Resource, education, prevention and support center for parents of children ages 0-5 (sliding scale available).

**PARENTS AS TEACHERS:** (through Parent Connection) 321-1500; In-home educational program for parents with children under 3 years of age.

**PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT:** 740-8267; Numerous health programs available in addition to referral for free or limited cost health services such as dental and vision.

**CASA DE LOS NIÑOS:** 624-5600; Temporary shelter for children in families undergoing significant crisis or stress; shelter for abused/neglected children; other miscellaneous programs available such as parenting classes, fathering, and divorce group for children.

**PARENTS ANONYMOUS:** 622-6869 (office) or 1-800-352-0528 (24 hour call line); Parent support and crisis intervention for child abuse prevention.

**CHILD PARENT CENTER - HEAD START:** 623-8680 – 602 E. 22rd Street, Tucson, AZ, 85713

**RAISING SPECIAL KIDS:** 1-800-237-3007

**FIRST THINGS FIRST: Birth to Five Helpline:** 877-705-KIDS

**Read On Arizona.org**

**Important Phone Numbers:**

- Director – Dr. Susan Shinn 696-8909
- Operations Specialist – Lety Granados 696-8909
- Front Office/Attendance 696-8909
- Health Assistant – Genesis Guerrero 696-8910
- Attendance Office 696-8910
- Transportation 696-8870

**Teacher Contact Numbers:**

- Jessica Caramella, Teacher 696-8916
- Demi Rodriquez, Teacher 696-8915
- Sandy Fulks, Teacher 696-8914
- Jessica Jankowski-Gallo, Teacher 696-8906
- Jennifer Oquendo, Teacher 696-8912

**Student Services Contact Numbers:**

- Speech Pathologist – Sara Piekarski 696-8849
- School Psychologist – Annette Campbell 696-8850
The Flowing Wells Early Childhood Center is dedicated to providing a quality and enriched learning experience, which is developmentally appropriate for all children.

“We treasure and value the importance of each child’s experiences.”

Our priorities include:

ENVIRONMENT
We provide a safe and stimulating learning environment that supports and encourage a variety of choices. The environment also provides an abundance of appropriate activities and loving guidance.

CORE GOALS
We strive for each child to become more self-sufficient as they increase their social skills. We encourage and facilitate a love of learning and respect for self and peers. Parental involvement is an essential element to achieve these goals.

INDIVIDUALITY AND DIVERSITY
We promote tolerance, recognizing and applauding each child’s talents, ethnicity, beliefs and lifestyle. We support each family’s values and work to provide an opportunity for each child to acquire a strong, positive sense of their own identity while developing respect and consideration for other people whose perspectives and experiences may differ from their own.

FLEXIBILITY
We work towards individual goals based on each child’s needs and capabilities. Learning opportunities and experiences are planned; spontaneous teaching moments due to suggestions, unexpected events, needs of a child and integrated activities are also included.