



**JAMES RUSHTON  
EARLY LEARNING CENTER**

**FAMILY HANDBOOK**

## Table of Contents

Welcome	4
History	4
License	4
Accreditation	4
Additional Regulations	4
Philosophy	4
Goals of Learning	5
Classroom Organization	6
Teaching Staff Credentials	7
Curriculum	7
Assessment	8
Family Focus	9
Parent's Role and Responsibilities	12
Application and Enrollment	13
Enrollment Policy and Procedures	13
Required Forms	14
Immunizations	14
Tuition and Fees	15
Scholarships	15
Withdrawal Policy	16
Children's Files	16
Sign-in/Sign-out	16
Parking	16
Attendance	16
Closing Days	17
Items Provided by Parents	17
Toilet Training	17
Clothing	18
Injury and Emergency Medical Care	18
Illness/ Illness Guidelines	18
Administration of Medication	21
Nutrition, Food and Food Allergies	22
Personal Belongings	24
Inclement Weather Plan	24
Air Quality/Heat Index	25
Emergency Evacuation Procedure	24
Equal Opportunity- Non-discrimination	25
Field Trips	26
Reporting Requirement	26
Guidance/Discipline	26
Discontinuation of Services	27
Back to Sleep Requirements/ SIDS Policy	28
Hiring Staff by Parents	28
Quality Assurance	28

Celebration Guidelines	29
Transitions to Older Classrooms	30
Outdoor Play	31
Transportation	31
Public Notice	31
Family Involvement Commitment	32
Acknowledgement of Receipt	33

## **Welcome to James Rushton Early Learning Center**

The information contained in this “Family Handbook” will introduce you to the philosophy and organization of the Center. It will serve as a quick reference to the daily operating policies and procedures. Your familiarity with them will help make your child’s day a most rewarding experience. JRELC was created to meet the needs for high quality child care for the children in the Woodlawn and surrounding areas. We look forward to working with you to provide a secure foundation for your child to ensure successful growth and learning. **Not all policies and procedures can be listed here. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.**

### **History**

James Rushton Early Learning Center (JRELC) originated as an outreach of James Rushton I Foundation to serve the needs of working families of infants and toddlers. It was the intent of the JRI Foundation to expand to serve infants to pre-school. Currently, we are part of the Woodlawn Purpose Built Communities. JRELC serves as part of the Woodlawn Educational Pipeline of Cradle to Career.

### **License**

The Center is licensed by the State of Alabama’s Department of Human Resources. This shows compliance with the Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers and Nighttime Centers as prescribed by the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources. This document is available for review at <http://dhr.alabama.gov/documents/MinimumStandardsDayCare.pdf>

### **Accreditation**

It is the intention of JRELC to seek accreditation from the National Academy of Early Childhood Program, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), as we are eligible. Many of the procedures and standards outlined in this Handbook support the high standards required for accreditation.

### **Additional Regulations**

JRELC meets regulations outlined by USDA, and other regulation codes, including Fire Inspections, Jefferson County Health Department Inspections and Building Codes.

### **Philosophy**

Staff at JRELC is committed to providing a high-quality program for young children and their families. The program is designed to promote the development of the whole child by helping to develop skills in all areas: physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language. This goal is met by providing appropriate elemental curriculum, a stimulating learning environment, and supportive relationships between children, parents and staff. We recognize and celebrate every child’s individuality, unique needs, interests and strengths. Our teachers

help each child to identify and develop these traits, while helping him or her to master social and academic skills.

At JRELC we believe that when provided the proper environment and stimulation in the early years, children will, in later years, be better prepared to learn and succeed, to be engaged socially, to be productive financially, and to care for those whom they love and for those whom they are responsible. We believe that at the early developing ages of 0-4 years, children need:

- A safe and loving environment in which to learn;
- Responsive teachers and family members who recognize and provide for their needs;
- Interactions with other children;
- Age appropriate learning tools and curricula for optimal learning that promote their total development;
- Appropriate building blocks in order to be fully prepared to enter and take advantage of the K through 12 education system;
- A healthy lifestyle with adequate nutrition, physical care and emotional attention;
- Loving and caring family members that nurture and support their development and education;
- A supportive community that is safe and provides additional enrichment experiences.

### **Our Goals of Learning**

In a caring and positive atmosphere, we create a warm and happy place for infants, toddlers and preschoolers to learn. As we bridge the gap from home to school, we guide children to a continued good self- image, building social skills in a school setting.

Sensory, motor, perceptual and language skills are introduced through materials and activities that are both child-centered and teacher directed. Experiences are planned to emphasize the process rather than the product, fostering a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Based on the theory that children learn through play, classroom routines encourage active involvement, meaningful experimentation and reinforcement through repetition. Schedules are designed with the balance of structure and free choice, as well as, active and quiet times.

Recognizing that children grow in predictable stages, we treat each child as an individual, working from the level each child has attained and moving forward a step at a time. We teach love of learning by allowing children to experience their own stage of development, helping them to feel “success without pressure.”

## **Classroom Organization**

JRELC is divided into four age groupings;

- Infants – Six weeks to approximately 12 months
- Younger Toddlers – Approximately 12 months through approximately 24 months
- Older Toddlers – 24-36 months
- Pre-school – 36 months and up

### **Infants**

The infant program serves children from the age of six weeks until the age of 18 months. Our program is designed to promote feelings of belonging and the loving care which help infants to grow and develop to their full potential. Children eat, sleep, and play according to his/her own schedule. Every infant is an individual with unique abilities, desires and emotions. Our program is designed to meet the individual needs of each child and to provide them with educational experiences. In our infant classrooms, we provide a creative and stimulating program which encourages visual, language, gross motor and small motor experiences to enhance learning through their own natural curiosity. Our highly qualified and professional teachers will guide and encourage your child in every stage of his or her development. We firmly believe in the need for open and thorough communication between teachers and each family to provide loving care and guidance.

### **Toddler**

Our toddler program serves children from approximately 18 months to 36 months. The toddler classrooms are designed to provide stimulating experiences for the children where they can learn through their own inquisitiveness. The emphasis during the toddler years is on building self-confidence and fostering the natural curiosity that toddlers possess. Throughout the day toddlers enjoy the large variety of play materials that are readily made available to them, as well as creative centers where children can dress-up, build with blocks, and experiment in the sensory table. Art, music, language and science activities geared to little hands are also introduced. Our teachers offer the tenderness, warmth, and patience so essential to this young age. Children feel comfortable in our toddler class settings when their parents leave. Deep respect for each child ensures that your toddler will truly love his or her school environment and, from that, develop a long lasting love for learning.

### **Preschoolers**

JRELC has preschool classrooms that serve children age three through four years. Our preschool program prepares children socially and academically, as well as, supports and encourages the development of independence, responsibility, and confidence, all of which are essential for the child's ongoing success in kindergarten. Our educational program focuses on each child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development by offering concrete, hands-on activities for the child to explore. The preschool curriculum is designed to actively engage each child in developmentally age appropriate activities exploring the

content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and technology. Our skilled teachers prepare curriculum that is exciting and challenging, as well as supportive of each child's own learning style. Our preschool room arrangement creates the optimum learning environment. It allows children easy access to educational toys, materials and books, enabling them to initiate and expand their activities. Each classroom is organized with areas for block play, manipulative toys, art creativity, dramatic play, discovery science, writing and reading in addition to larger spaces for group activities.

### **Teaching Staff Credentials**

All teaching staff is required to meet the criteria as set forth by the Alabama Department of Human Resources; however, we are striving to maintain a higher standard and require more of our staff.

Because our teaching staff members are educated and trained in child development/ early childhood education and have had many varied experiences, they will be able to:

- Recognize and assess growth patterns of each child in their care;
- Plan and implement developmentally appropriate programs that are both age and individually appropriate for the children in their care;
- Work alongside early intervention consultants to help determine interventions and placements for children with special needs.

### **Curriculum**

JRLEC curriculum is based on the knowledge that young children learn through active exploration of their environment. We use The Creative Curriculum® as our curriculum framework. This curriculum has been researched and found to be valid and reliable for the children we serve. We supplement this curriculum with other age appropriate resources.

The philosophy of The Creative Curriculum® is that young children learn best by doing. The Creative Curriculum® is built on theories of development in young children, that all children learn through active exploration of their environment and therefore the environment plays a critical role in learning. The goal of the Creative Curriculum is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive and enthusiastic learners by actively exploring their environment. The curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development: Social/Emotional, Cognitive, Physical and Language. The planned activities for the children, the organization of the environment, the selection of toys and materials, planning the daily schedule and interacting with the children, are all designed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the curriculum and give your child a successful experience during their early years. The Creative Curriculum® shows teachers how to integrate learning in literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology throughout the day. It also gives the teacher a wide range of teaching strategies-- from child-initiated learning to teacher-directed approaches-- to best ways to respond to children's learning styles, strengths, and interests. The JRELC staff builds curriculum experiences for their children around the environment, interests and developmental levels of the children in the

classrooms. The richer the environments, the more concrete opportunities there are for children to learn by interacting with materials and people. The teacher's role is to create an environment that invites children to observe, to be active, to make choices, and to experiment. Our environment is assessed using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) and the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS).

### **Creative Curriculum Goals and Objectives**

These goals and objectives provide a direction for planning the program and a way to determine what children know and how they are developing. This information enables teachers to respond to each child individually, to build on strengths and target skills that need strengthening. Because our teachers have a holistic approach, and focus on the 'whole child' to promote learning, the goals interrelate and focus on all areas of development:

- Social/Emotional Development: children's feelings about themselves, the development of responsibility, and their ability to relate positively to others.
- Physical Development: A child's gross and fine motor development
- Cognitive Development: children's thinking skills, including development of symbolic and problem-solving skills.
- Language Development: children's ability to communicate through words, both spoken and written.

### **Social Emotional Development**

Knowing the importance that social and emotional development has on development both in the early years and later in life, JRELC has adopted Conscious Discipline. Conscious Discipline focuses on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5. Conscious Discipline is a research-based approach that supports teachers and parents in promoting social emotional development of young children.

### **Assessment**

**Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3):** This system includes a series of questionnaires designed to identify infants and young children who show potential developmental problems. Each questionnaire has specific questions that are answered by the parent to determine whether the child is on target or needs further evaluation. All children are evaluated using this tool within the first 60 days of enrollment. If a child is identified as needing further evaluation, your child's teacher will contact you to discuss the next steps.

### **Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)**

JRELC anchors our center on the premise that relationships are key building blocks for children, families and communities. We focus on promoting social and emotional health. Research indicates that the development of protective factors can help children overcome challenges. The DECA Assessment helps to identify strengths of children in areas of attachment/relationships, initiative, and self regulation. Teachers and parents complete these assessments on each child in

the program throughout the year. We use this information to enhance our environment with intentional activities that will strengthen these areas.

**Teaching Strategies Assessment (TSGOLD):** Teaching Strategies is an authentic performance-based assessment tool. It is designed to help classroom teachers document and evaluate children's skills, knowledge, behaviors and accomplishments across a wide variety of curriculum areas on multiple occasions in order to enhance teaching and learning and to keep track of each child's individual achievement. Students are observed during their regular classroom activities and their progress is recorded three times a year with a Developmental Checklist, a portfolio collection, and a summary report. Parents are required to attend two (2) Parent-Teacher Conferences a Year to review their child's progress and set developmental goals.

### **Family Focus**

James Rushton Early Learning Center has identified 4 desired family outcomes:

- (1) Families will learn to understand their child's strengths, abilities and special needs;
- (2) Families will help their children develop and learn;
- (3) Families will form meaningful relationships with teachers, other parents, and community members;
- (4) Families will learn to access desired services, programs and activities in their communities.

James Rushton Early Learning Center (JRELC) recognizes that family involvement is a crucial component to the success of a child's overall development. Parents are their child's most important teacher. Research has indicated that children are more successful at learning when their parents are actively involved in their learning, both at home and at school. To support parents as partners JRELC commits to encouraging families to be full partners in the education of their children. We want to work as partners with families to help all children excel. JRELC offers an open-door policy, allowing parents to visit and participate in our programs at all times, fostering a sense of openness and inclusion.

JRELC places a unique emphasis on families by providing and encouraging specific opportunities that will strengthen family bonds. As a parent you will be expected to complete 12 hours of Family Focus Activities every year. Flyers will be posted in the Center advertising these events and opportunities.

JRELC has developed a family involvement plan because we want to create a caring partnership to support our children. These plans, which are reviewed annually, reflect the center's commitment to build family involvement through the following components: communicating about center programs and child progress, recruiting family volunteers, involving families with learning activities at

home, including families in school-decision-making, assisting families with parenting skills, and collaborating with the community to coordinate resources and services.

### **Communicating about Center Programs and Child Progress**

- Initial visits are important. Come visit the Center with your child before the “first” day, and on that day, plan to stay as long as you and/or your child need. Once children are accepted into program, the director and teachers will schedule day(s) to assist with the transition process. Enrolled parents are welcome to visit their child’s classroom at any time during regular hours of operation.
- Parent Orientation will be held at the beginning of each new school year and at enrollment for parents who enroll their children at other times of the year. Classroom rules, daily schedules, roles of teachers, and expectations of parents and children will be discussed. Teachers will also explain our program philosophy, curriculum objectives, educational goals and effective strategies families can use to promote children’s learning. Parents are encouraged to ask questions and share cultural information about their family. During orientation please share specific information about your family’s culture and structure so teachers can use this information to plan culturally relevant experiences for the children.
- Teaching staff will be educated on how to reach out and communicate to parents during staff meetings and professional development.
- Information will be sent home in a language and format that parents, to the extent possible, can understand. Interpreters, to the extent possible, will be provided for parent conferences and parent meetings.
- Classroom newsletters will be sent to families periodically
- Information will be available on the JRELC Website.
- Annual Calendars will be sent home to allow parents appropriate time to plan schedules. Any changes to the calendar will be sent to the parent in writing, posted at the front desk, and noted in at the check-in computer.
- Call the Center during the day if you have a question. Please ask teachers for the phone extension to your child’s class. Since teachers’ primary focus is on the children, please be prepared to leave a message. The teacher will call you back as soon as there is a break in the schedule.
- Plan to talk to your teacher daily at drop off and pick up times because they can give you the most accurate information. Daily/weekly notes will be used to communicate information from the teacher about your child’s day/week. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, ongoing two-way communication with teachers. Please refrain from using cell phones at drop-off and pick up times.
- Individual Parent/Teacher Conferences between parents and teachers will be scheduled at least twice annually. Additional conferences may be requested by either parent or teacher to address child progress, behavior,

- etc. During these conferences parents are encouraged to contribute to decisions regarding their child's goals and plans for activities and services.
- The center will support teaching staff in the importance of involving and communicating with families through efforts such as infant/toddler grams, white boards with current information about activities in the class. Text, phone, email conversational also convey important information about your child.

### **Recruiting Family Volunteers**

Through the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) families are invited to participate in the center by planning events that will benefit the overall quality of the program. Some of the volunteer activities could include: opportunities to network with other families, planning special events such as the Fall Festival and teacher recognition, center enhancements, and classroom volunteering, among others.

As a parent, you are welcome to visit during regular hours of operation. We encourage parents to be a part of our program to feed their infant, to read a story, to go on field trips, or to come and play. For each individual child at each different stage of development, the teacher will assist the parent in scheduling interactions so that it can be a positive rather than a stressful event.

### **Involving Families with Learning Activities at Home**

- Through the assistance of our partners, JRELC will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's growth and development.
- Mini-sessions will be planned during the year on topics related to home support determined by parent survey responses.
- A Family Resource Center will be implemented with resources such as books and interactive, manipulative materials that enhance children's growth and development.

### **Including Families in Center Decision Making**

- Parents will have the opportunity to provide feedback through surveys and parent meetings. Each year all parents will be given a survey to complete about parent involvement in the center. These results will be tallied and presented to the advisory committee for consideration in devising, adapting the program improvement plan.
- A Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) will be established yearly to provide feedback about the program, make suggestions, and work on center-wide projects. All parents are encouraged to attend these meetings. Parents will be polled to see what meeting time is best for the majority. Notices of meeting times will be posted. A member of this group will also represent the Parent Group.

### **Assisting Parents with Parenting Skills**

- The Center will work with the PAC to develop and schedule opportunities for families to create support groups based on age and needs of parents
- JRELC will work with the PAC to plan and implement workshops on topics of interest related to parenting based on family interest surveys.
- JRELC will seek to provide parents with a support group and some learning opportunities through the “Lunch Bunch.” This will be a scheduled event when parents can bring their lunches to the Early Learning Center, discuss parenting concerns and parenting questions (i.e. childhood nutrition, discipline and guidance, growth and development).

### **Collaborating with the Community to Coordinate Resources and Services**

- A Family Resource Directory will be available in the center to help families connect to local resources.
- Staff will seek opportunities to host community events for families
- The center will share flyers of community events.

### **Parent’s Role and Responsibilities**

JRELC recognizes the vital role that parents play in the school life of their children.

Parents must cooperate with Center in carrying out all governmental laws, rules and regulations affecting the operation. JRELC also commits to meet accreditation standards of NAEYC.

### **Expectations of Parents**

- Read the bulletin boards, notices and newsletters that are sent home. Important information is shared with you on a regular basis, but you must make the effort to read it.
- Give your child time to adjust to child care before leaving them at the center. Parents can help set a positive tone for the rest of the day by taking a few minutes in the morning to greet the teachers and help involve your child in an activity.
- Value staff members and show them common courtesy. Caregivers are more than just babysitters. We employ teachers who have training and education in child development. Show respect for their position as an important part of your child’s development.
- Focus on your child when you pick him/her up. Take time to greet staff and your child and see if there is anything the teacher wishes to communicate before you leave. Please refrain from talking on cell phones.
- Supervise your children in the building. Keep them with you as you take them to their classrooms. Your child’s safety and well-being is our primary concern.
- Keep a sick child home. The state mandates health regulations to prevent spread of infectious illness. Although it may seem inconvenient at times, these rules also keep your child from being infected by others as well. It is up to you to have a back-up plan for a child who cannot attend.

- Address concerns in a respectful way and to the appropriate person. Do not bad mouth staff to others - seek to resolve your problem with the appropriate staff member.
- Try to minimize your child's time in child care. Most children have had a full day after 9 hours and need to re-fuel emotionally by spending time with their family.
- Communicate with teachers about what's going on at home.
- Make sure children get a good night's rest so they are ready for their busy day.

### **Entry Cards**

The safety of your children is a major focus of JRELC. Please note the following:

- Use your entry card to ENTER the front door and to gain entrance onto the classroom hall. Cards do not work before 7:00 AM or after 6:00 PM. We track entrance and exit from the building. The replacement for the card is \$10.
- Only let yourself and your children in the door. Please help us limit entry to staff and families. Please refrain from allowing unknown individuals to enter with you.
- When someone other than parents with entry cards pick up a child, leave a note at the front desk and with the teacher before their arrival. Children will not be released to individuals who are not listed on your enrollment forms or without written permission. Please advise these individuals that they must present a photo ID which will be copied for your child's file.
- If you do not have your card, you may press the buzzer near the door and wait for a staff person to let you in.

### **Monitoring System**

JRELC has a camera monitoring system that records activities in certain areas of the building and parking lot.

### **Application and Enrollment**

JRELC requires an enrollment fee of \$50 for each child that ensures placement in the program. Once the registration fee is received, JRELC provides each family with a registration packet. These forms must be completed, and information provided prior to a child's first day of enrollment.

### **Enrollment Policy and Procedures**

The following order of priority for enrollment of new children is set as follows:

1. Siblings of **currently** enrolled children.
2. Children of families residing in or employed in the Woodlawn Area. Must show proof of residence and/or employment.
3. Children of JRELC staff members. There are a limited number of slots for staff children.
4. Siblings of currently enrolled children of community families.
5. Children in surrounding areas.

Prospective families may submit a pre-enrollment application indicating interest in the JRELC program. When age appropriate space is available, families will be contacted, and an orientation will be scheduled. At this time the director and staff will review child's forms and develop a transition plan.

### **Required Forms**

All parents are required to provide:

- Child's Preadmission Record before the first day of school
- Health/Emergency Form (this form also includes allergy information)
- Getting to Know you Form (this form is completed by the family and reviewed with the teaching team prior to start date)
- Certificate of Immunization Record (form from your pediatrician)
- Health Forms (Completed by physician and family)
- Application for Child Care Subsidy (if applicable)
- USDA Application
- Signed Family Involvement Compact
- Signed statement that parents have received and read the Parent Handbook
- Signed tuition payment agreement

Your child will not be allowed to start school until all forms are on file. All forms must be updated yearly (and throughout the year should your emergency contact information change.) In addition, parents are asked to complete other forms and surveys that provide information on their child and his or her relationship with the family. This information will assist Center staff in providing the best care and education possible for your child.

### **Immunizations**

The *Alabama State Certificate of Immunization* forms are required by state law and provide information concerning each child's immunization and physical exam. JRELC allows NO exceptions. We require that a child's health certificate be completed no more than six months prior to the date the child enters the Center. Parents are required to keep the (immunizations record) up to date, as the health department has the authority to send children home if immunizations are not current. A child who is legally under-immunized will be excluded promptly from attendance in the center if a vaccine-preventable disease occurs in the program.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Fees for full-time positions are set annually. A fee schedule is available from the Office.

Tuition includes all table foods, baby food, and limited types of formula. Your monthly fee is the same each month regardless of school closings or days your child is absent. Families are expected to pay for all days arranged in their agreement with JRELC. Tuition is calculated on a year-round basis taking holidays into account. Therefore, no deductions are made for absence or

holidays. Because staffing and other operational costs are incurred on the basis of enrollment, this cost must be assessed even when a child is absent.

Tuition is due based on the Signed Tuition Agreement. Monthly payments are expected in full no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. Bi Monthly payments are expected by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Weekly payments are expected on Friday before the next week. Late fees will be assessed as Tuition Agreement states.

### **Delinquent Accounts/Collections**

Accounts are considered 5 days after payment is due. Payments must be received in full by the end of the current month, all future services may be terminated. Parents with delinquent accounts will be notified by message or mail concerning their outstanding balance. Should accounts not be addressed immediately, enrollment is relinquished. If a family withdraws with an unpaid balance, the outstanding balance will be sent to collections. Any exception to this policy should be cleared, in person, with the Director, approved by the Executive Director and put in writing for our records. Please note that JRELC is charged a bank fee for all returned checks. If a check is returned, JRELC charges \$30.00 to cover our cost.

### **Late Pick-up Fee**

Program hours are 7:00 AM to 5:45 PM. JRELC closes promptly at 6:00 PM. Therefore, parents should plan to arrive no later than 5:45 PM in order to collect children's belongings and sign them out by this time. The Center is not budgeted for after-hour staffing; therefore, any parent whose child remains after this time will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$5 for the interval from 6:01 p.m. to 6:05 p.m. After 6:05 \$1 per minute is charged. If you are going to be late, please notify the center immediately so that your child can be prepared for this change in scheduling and staff arrangements can be made. Late fees will be charged regardless of notification.

### **Scholarships**

James Rushton Early Learning Center offers partial scholarships for children that meet specific criteria. Scholarship applications are available from the Office Manager.

### **Withdrawal Policy**

JRELC requires a full two-week written notice of withdrawal for each child. There is no proration of tuition. Parents are responsible for all tuition and fees, including late pick up fees, late payment fees and other assessed fees.

### **Children's Files**

Files are kept on each child. These files are confidential and contain the application, information forms, emergency forms, signed parental consent forms, certificate of immunization, assessment forms, anecdotal reports, tuition agreement and other records that may assist the teacher in working effectively with the family. A child's file is retained for at least three years from the date of

last enrollment. Parents are welcome to schedule a time to review the file with the Center staff.

### **Sign-in/Sign-out**

**Parents are required by law to bring their children to their classrooms, to sign them in upon arrival, and to come into the Center to sign them out prior to departure.** (DHR state requirement). Parents are required to check each child in and out at the front desk and to sign the in-out sheets in each classroom. The only people other than a child's custodial parents who are authorized to take the child from the Center are those people designated in writing on the Child's Preadmission Record Form. We also request that parents inform the front office and the classroom teachers when someone other than a parent will be picking up or delivering their child. New parents, as well as adults authorized on the form will be asked to furnish picture ID upon request. Please inform those authorized to pick up your child that they should expect to have their ID checked upon arrival at the Center. JRELC staff will not release children to a person who is visibly impaired due to a medical condition, alcohol consumption, substance abuse, prescription drugs or other causes. In the event the parent or legal guardian is impaired, a staff member will call someone designated on the release form.

### **Parking**

There is limited short-term parking available at the Center. Do NOT park in the fire lane. We ask that you do not park in lanes designed for traffic flow. We also ask that you not leave car motors running or leave other children unattended inside your car when you enter the building.

### **Attendance**

JRELC program hours are 7:00 AM until 5:45 PM Monday through Friday, unless otherwise noted due to official closing dates or emergency related conditions. This eleven-hour schedule has been set to provide a range of drop off and pick up times to accommodate varied work schedules. However, it should be noted that much over 9 to 9 ½ hours is considered inappropriate for very young children to be cared for in group settings. Therefore, please do not view the full 11-hour schedule as appropriate for a child on a daily basis. In addition, the classroom schedules are set up in such a way that educational activities will be underway by 9:00 AM (after arrival and breakfast is served.) Due to the educational nature of the program, unless your child will be arriving late due to an appointment, please refrain from bringing your child in after 9:00 AM, as late arrivals are disruptive to the on-going activities in the classroom. Please inform the director and classroom teachers if you know your child will be arriving later than 9:00 AM and unless arranged with the teachers, no child will be accepted at or after lunch or nap time. Refer to the tuition agreement which species hours of attendance.

### **Absences**

Please call if your child will be absent. Children should be dropped off no later than 9:00 AM every day. In the event that your child has a doctor's appointment and they will be late, please let your child's teacher know in advance if possible.

## **Closing Days**

JRELC offers year-round care, but will observe the following holidays:

- Winter Break
- Martin Luther King Birthday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Break (Thursday & Friday)
- Winter Break

Additionally, we will be closed for staff training as scheduled.

- President's Day
- Spring Break - 2 days
- Summer (3 days in August)

Yearly calendars will be posted and given to parents and posted in the center. Any changes will be shared with parents in writing and noted on the official calendar.

## **Items Provided by Parents**

Infant, Toddlers, Twos

(Please, no diaper bags or backpacks.)

- Clean bottles
- Formula (if your child's prescribed formula is not on list)
- Disposable diapers and wipes
- Two (2) changes of weather appropriate clothing
- Jackets, coats, hats, gloves appropriate for weather
- Toddlers/Twos – child sized over (blanket) for sleeping

Pre-school

- Change of weather appropriate clothing
- Jackets coats, hats, gloves appropriate for weather
- Child sized cover (blanket) for sleeping

## **Toilet Training**

Sometime around the age of two, a child will show readiness and willingness in learning to use the toilet. Staff will discuss this process with parents and develop a plan to support the child. During the training period, children will not be coerced if they are not showing developmental sign of being ready and lapses in training are to be expected. Please plan to bring extra sets of clothes during this period.

## **Clothing**

Children's clothing should be comfortable and easy for them to manage, especially during the critical stages of toilet learning. Children need to be able to

engage in messy and active indoor and outdoor play. Therefore, play clothes which can withstand hard use and can be easily laundered are important. Parents are asked to understand that reasonable efforts will be made to protect clothing but that occasional stains from paint or food may occur. Children should wear sturdy shoes with non-slip soles to help prevent falling from climbing equipment. Open toe shoes/sandals, flip-flops and hard heeled boots are strongly discouraged as these pose tripping and falling hazards. Parents are asked to provide a seasonal and size appropriate change of clothes that can be used in case of emergencies and to check carefully at the end of the day for items to be laundered and returned. All articles of clothing should be clearly marked with the child's name to prevent loss. Teachers cannot be held responsible for keeping up with multiple items which are not labeled. Additional clothing and accessory items discouraged from being worn at the Center include: child jewelry (particularly valuable items), hair beads and barrettes. Each of these pose dangerous choking hazards should a child put them in their mouth. Children should be adequately dressed for the season and weather for outdoor play on each day of attendance. Children generally go outside, even on cold days for a brief time, if it is not raining. A warm jacket with a hood, or hat and mittens are needed on cold days. Physical development experiences that include both teacher-directed and free play activities are offered daily. Indoor and/or outdoor play activities are an important part of our program. Children will be expected to participate in play activities.

### **Injury and Emergency Medical Care**

Minor injuries to children will be treated by administering first aid which includes washing wound and bandaging. When an accident occurs, the teacher will complete an Incident Report Form. The parent will be notified by telephone and will be given the form to read and sign at the conclusion of the school day. Most teachers have first aid and CPR training, which includes clearing a blocked air passage and rescue breathing. In the event of a more serious injury, the teacher will perform emergency first aid, and another staff person will inform the parent by telephone using the contact information on file. After assessing the situation, the parent may be asked to come to the Center to transport the child to a physician's office or a medical facility. If parents cannot be contacted, the persons designated by the parent on the emergency form will be contacted. If immediate and urgent medical treatment is required, the Center will call 911. Emergency medical personnel and center staff will determine if an ambulance is necessary. Child Preadmission Records authorize the Center and/or its designated employee(s) to secure and authorize any medical attention, treatment, and services as may be necessary for a child whose parents cannot be immediately contacted. Any qualified person providing such required medical attention, treatment, or services may accept such written consent as if given by the parent in person. The Child's Preadmission Record will be in the child's file and will be sent with the person accompanying a child to a medical facility. In the event of an accident requiring medical attention, the parent's insurance will act as the primary coverage.

## **Health Regulations**

James Rushton Early Learning Center is a SMOKE FREE environment. No smoking is permitted in the presence of children, within the visual sight line of children or anywhere on center property.

## **Illness and Communicable Diseases**

Parents are asked to notify the Center by calling the classroom if their child is to be absent for any reason. If a child develops a contagious disease, parents of children directly exposed to the disease will be alerted. A child who has had an illness should not return to school until released by the physician and is able to participate in the total program. A written release is required for re-admittance to the center. However, the Center Director has the authority to refuse admittance to the center based on illnesses.

A child showing symptoms of illness while at the Center will be separated from the other children in their class and cared for until he or she can be taken home. Based on health department recommendations, parents or their designees are expected to pick up the child within one hour of the time they are contacted.

If your child is having surgery, they may not return to the center for at least 24-48 hours post-operation, with a release from the doctor and are able to **fully participate** in the program.

A child showing signs of illness must be picked up from the Center immediately: Do not bring your child to school if there has been an unexplained rash, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, impetigo or conjunctivitis. This causes needless exposure to the other children.

Please understand illness is handled on an individual basis. For example, diarrhea in the infant room could be caused by teething, while diarrhea in the two-year-old room is usually caused by an intestinal upset. If your child has been sent home due to illness, he/she must remain out of school for the entire next day unless a re-admit note is given from the physician and the director determines that the your child can fully participate in the program. If your child goes to the doctor, please bring in a return to school slip. Remember, antibiotics need to be taken at least for full 24 hours before your child returns to the center.

The staff will visually screen children for any obvious symptoms of illness upon arrival. If a child is displaying a creamy white or green nose discharge, he/she needs to be removed from the center. The symptom can be caused by an infection and the child should be seen by the family physician. In the event that an allergist has seen your child, and he/she has confirmed that your child has allergies that cause these symptoms, we need to have a doctor's statement in writing for your child's file.

Exposure to many contagious diseases is a normal part of childhood. The most common illnesses are associated with the upper respiratory system, including ear infections, and the gastrointestinal system. Infants and toddlers are particularly

vulnerable to some diseases because certain components of their general immune system are not fully developed. In an effort to manage and prevent disease spread, parents are expected to stay current with their child's immunizations and to strictly observe the Health Policy. The parents should report instances of exposure or illness to the Center administrative staff and take appropriate action when symptoms of illness have been defined.

JRELC follows the policy recommendations from the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the local health department. These health agencies recommend that children be excluded from group care for the following reasons:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in all program activities, including outdoor play.
- The illness results in greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- The child has any of the following conditions: fever at or above 100.4 degrees, lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other signs of illness.
- Diarrhea that is not contained by diapers or toilet use or stools that contain blood and/or mucus. JRELC acknowledges that this is a difficult standard to apply but adheres to the definition of diarrhea as two loose movements within an hour. Children should not return as long as symptoms persist or unless stool sample has been cultured and found negative. The presence of fever with diarrhea requires exclusion until child is free of fever for 24 hours and symptom free.
- Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined and documented by a pediatrician to be caused by a non-communicable condition (such as reflux) and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Mouth sores associated with the inability of the child to control his or her saliva, unless the child's physician states the child is noninfectious.
- Rash with fever, discharge and behavior change, until the physician has determined it is not a non-communicable disease.
- Ringworm must be treated for 24 hours and covered upon return to the Center with doctor's note to return. If new sores emerge, the center may require an additional trip to doctor with follow up excuses.
- Pink or red conjunctivitis with white or yellow discharge until checked by a physician and cleared for readmission. (Pink eye must be treated with prescription eye drops and be without discharge before returning to the Center.)
- Strep throat until 24 hours after treatment is initiated. Child must be able to participate in regular activities and must have doctor's statement to return.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated (lesions must be covered.)
- Open wounds and skin infections must be covered in order to participate in group care.
- Head lice with no nits.

It is difficult to predict and plan for every illness. Each will be evaluated based on the child and the situation. JRELC maintains the right to refuse to allow sick children to remain in center care.

A child should remain at home if he or she is infectious and until he or she is free of fever for 24 hours after an illness, without medication. This would mean that a child leaving school during the day with a fever of 100.4 degrees temperature or higher would not be able to return the next morning without written permission from a physician. If a child develops symptoms of illness while at the Center, they will be separated from their classmates and cared for in the sick room. Parents will be contacted to pick up the child as soon as possible. If the child is sent home from the Center ill, a physician's note authorizing the child's return to group care may be requested, depending upon specific situations. This measure is necessary to comply with state law and curtail the spread of infection. **The overall health and well-being of all JRELC teachers and children is of utmost importance, therefore, the Center reserves the right to refuse care due to illness.**

### **Administration of Medication**

If a child should require medication while in our care, staff can administer prescription medication ONLY if the following conditions are met per the Baby Douglas Law:

- 1) The parent completes a medication form (available in the office and classrooms) that includes specific instructions that match the prescribed dosage and time to administer (We can have NO open-ended medication directives, for example, "give as needed." The Center cannot be responsible for making medication decisions.)
- 2) Nonprescription medications can only be administered with written doctor's orders and only when the dosage specifically matches the label recommendations for a child of that age. Parents may complete and submit forms for diaper cream without physician's signed forms. Over the counter medicine MUST be in the original container and/or box with dosing instructions. Child's name MUST be written on the container.
- 3) The medication is in its original container which includes the child's name, medication name, dosage, time of administration, physician's name and prescription number.
- 4) Unless physician's instructions indicate otherwise, medication can be given for a period of one week (5 school days). A new medication administration form must be completed by the parent each week. In the case of a serious medical condition, the Center may request parents administer medication or medical procedures. In such cases, temporary withdrawal from the Center may be needed until the child can safely participate in a group care situation.
- 5) Medications along with the medication form should be turned in to the teachers. All medications will be stored in specified areas in the Center in a locked, childproof cabinet or refrigerator inaccessible to children. Medications should not be left in children's bags or classroom cubbies.

- 6) Additional items that may be administered to children include insect repellent and sun screen. Forms are available in the classrooms for parents to complete for these items which are used most specifically during the summer months.
- 7) Long-term medications must have written authorization from the child's physician and parent. Prescription medication must have the original label affixed. Over-the counter medications must be in the original container and clearly labeled with the child's name. All outdated medications will be discarded. JRELC cannot accept long-term authorizations for over-the-counter medications such as Motrin, Tylenol and Benadryl.

### **Nutrition, Food and Food Allergies**

Children should not bring food, for example, fast food breakfast items, candy, chips, etc. to the Center. Food items brought should be limited to special snacks or celebrations such as birthdays (please refer to the JRELC Celebration Policy) and according to Jefferson County Health Standards and NAEYC accreditation standards may only be individual packaged items or bakery prepared so that specific ingredients are available in case of food allergy concerns.

Children will be served breakfast, a nutritious mid-day meal, and an afternoon snack, meeting guidelines of USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Menus are posted in each classroom. Teachers are directed not to hold breakfast for late arrivers due to health violations, so please do not call and make this request. Meals are scheduled based on USDA regulations and are posted in each classroom's schedule. Food or drink substitutions cannot be made for individual children except for documented medical/religious reasons. The center does not give cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months, serves only whole milk to children ages 12-24 months and 2% to 2 and older. Whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, hard pretzels, spoons of peanut butter, round chunks of raw carrots or meats that can be swallowed whole are not served.

Ready to feed formula or breast milk (supplied by parents) in sanitary plastic containers will be served. Bottle feedings should not contain solid food unless the child's health care provider provides the center with written instructions and a medical reason for this practice.

### **Food Allergies**

Food allergies often occur. Therefore, we require a specific health plan that includes a completed form from the doctor will be expected when a child should not eat/drink a certain food. This information is made available to the food services staff and will be posted in the classroom. Reasonable efforts are made to serve an alternate item. Families are expected to work with staff to address food allergies. Staff is aware of the symptoms of allergic reactions which include swelling, sudden onset of vomiting, difficulty breathing, itching, shortness of breath, etc. Should any of these symptoms occur we will follow emergency procedures and contact you immediately. Staff has received Food Allergen training via the Jefferson County Department of Health Food Handlers training.

## **Infant Feeding**

The Early Learning Center will accept, store and serve expressed human milk for feeding. Milk must be labeled with the infant's name and date. It will be stored in a refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen. We will gladly work with parents to coordinate feeding times according to the baby's schedule. No formula, milk, breast milk or infant foods will be warmed in a microwave. Baths of hot water will be used to warm milk at no more than 110 degrees for no more than five minutes. Teachers must discard any formula or breast milk that is served but not completely consumed or is not refrigerated after one hour. Infants unable to sit, will be held for bottle feedings. **WE WILL NOT PROP BOTTLES AT ANY TIME.** Children will not be allowed to have bottles while in a crib or bed. Toddlers and twos shall not be allowed to carry bottles, sippy cups or regular cups while crawling or walking. Teaching staff will offer children fluids from a cup as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.

Because breast milk is recommended as the best source of nourishment for infants, breast feeding is encouraged and supported by JRELC staff. A nursing room is provided for convenience and privacy for nursing mothers.

**It is highly advised that infants receive their first feeding of the day at home before center arrival, until they are old enough to eat table food from the Center menu.** It is difficult to accommodate numerous babies all arriving hungry at the same time. Parents of infants and children not yet old enough to eat Center meals and snacks must complete the feeding instructions portion of a daily form. According to Health Department regulations, bottles must be identified with the child's name and date when prepared. Stored breast milk must also include the date of storage. Infants will be held for bottle feeding with the only exception being when multiple children require feeding at the same time. Infants/babies will not be placed in a crib with a bottle. If not consumed, breast milk/formula will be discarded within an hour unless refrigerated and any leftover milk/formula will be discarded at the end of the day.

The teachers will work with families of infants to ensure that the food served by the Early Learning Center is based on the infants' individual nutritional needs and developmental stage. Early Learning Center teachers will not offer solid foods and fruit juices to infants younger than six months of age, unless this is recommended by the child's pediatrician in writing and approved by families. Cow's milk will not be served to infants younger than 12 months and will only serve whole milk to children 12-24 months.

## **Demand Schedule**

JRELC will feed any child who is hungry and to allow a tired child to sleep. Center staff will cooperate with parents in efforts to establish regular schedules for eating and sleeping. Quiet/rest time will be a part of the daily routine. Staff will, at a parent's request, attempt to gently wake a sleeping child at a prescribed time, but will permit the child to continue sleeping if needed.

### **USDA Non-Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Menus will be posted in classrooms, on website and at the front desk.

To file a program complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at [Http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint)

### **Personal Belongings**

Every child is provided with his or her own “cubby”. This is a personal space to keep a complete change of clothes and other items needed by the child while at the center. All personal items must be marked with your child’s name. Parents are responsible for bringing the following items from home: diapers and wipes, changes of clothing, naptime blanket and special “snuggly” for comforting if needed. Make sure that all items are labeled with your child’s name.

Children are requested to leave food, gum, candy, money and personal toys and games at home. Books are welcome at any time. Please be sure your child’s name is clearly marked on all books you bring to the Center.

### **Inclement Weather Plan**

In the event of school closing due to inclement weather, JRELC will follow Birmingham City Schools. However, in some circumstances JRELC may close even if Birmingham City Schools doesn’t. Please tune in to television stations for weather related announcements. Parents may also be notified of closings via text or email. Please make sure that your contact information is updated.

### **Air Quality and Heat Index**

Air Quality is monitored by the director during summer months in which air quality or high heat index is of concern. Although outdoor play is considered best practice, the director will make decisions related to air quality which may include changing outdoor time to early morning or limiting outside play time.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

JRELC plans for a variety of evacuation situations: fire, sheltering in place and off-site evacuation. In each event JRELC will provide for the safety of our school population. In accordance with Alabama State licensing policies fire drills and sheltering in place drills are conducted monthly. Evacuation drills are conducted twice a year.

### **Fire Drill**

Fire evacuation plans are developed and posted in each classroom. In case of fire, teachers will remove children from the building as quickly as possible to the outside parking area. Each restroom and play area will be checked to ensure total clearing of the building. Emergency telephone numbers are posted near each telephone and a call will be made to report the fire as quickly as possible. Fire extinguishers are strategically located in the hallways. The building is equipped with an automatic fire alarm system and smoke detectors. Sprinkler systems are installed in each classroom. Staff and children participate in monthly fire drills.

### **Shelter in Place**

This could be in the event of tornado. In the event the school needs to be secured (sheltered in place), the children will remain in the facility but will relocate to designated areas. See diagrams in each classroom.

### **Offsite Evacuation**

Should the children need to evacuate the building they will walk to the Social Venture Building, 5529 First Avenue South, Birmingham.

Detailed Evacuation Plans are available in the office.

### **Equal Opportunity- Non-discrimination**

JRELC believes that children and employees are entitled to equal opportunities and freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin or disability. Children and employees are entitled to work and play in an environment that is non-discriminatory and free of any harassment that interferes with a person's work/play performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work/play atmosphere.

### **Field Trips**

JRELC may offer opportunities for the children to take "field trips" off premises. The majority of these outings will be on foot, with an appropriate number of staff members per outing. Children might be placed in strollers and "trips" are limited to short periods of time when weather permits. The two-year olds may use a "lead rope" when taking a short outing to a nearby location. If an outing requires driving, parents must provide their own transportation. JRELC staff will ensure that a first aid kit is taken along on all outings. Staff will also carry an emergency pack containing contact numbers, and a cell phone. The staff will follow all traffic and safety rules when caring for children out the Center.

### **Reporting Requirement**

Staff at JRELC is required by law to report any suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or deprivation to local police or to the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

## **Guidance/Discipline**

JRELC believes that the child's self-esteem is the most important aspect of discipline. We design our classroom environment, curriculum and instructional practices to reduce or eliminate discipline problems. Teachers will implement positive strategies to guide children in developing self-control. If problems should occur, teachers will work with children to help them identify the problem behavior, discuss feelings, and choose a course of action that is in the best interest of all involved. The goal in the resolution of all conflicts is to help the child see how the behavior affects him or herself and others and to provide direction for positive alternative behaviors. Teachers will address challenging behavior by including parents and professionals, as needed, in order to develop an individualized plan to address the behavior.

Discipline with a positive approach will encourage children to gain their own sense of self-control. A few of our approaches are:

- Helping the child clearly understand what is expected of him or her.
- Catch them "doing good" with honest approval.
- Acknowledge and accept his or her feelings.
- Redirecting his or her attention or behavior.
- Talking with the child to let him or her express their emotions, in an individual manner.

There shall be no physical punishment or disciplinary action administered to the child. These include

- Any type of corporal punishment including hitting, spanking, swatting, pinching, shaking, or forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position.
- Verbal abuse, threats or derogatory comments.
- Withholding or forcing meals, snacks or naps.
- Punishment for accidents related to toileting.
- Isolating a child in any restricted area. Please note that classrooms do provide a quiet area with activities to promote self-calming strategies.

While parents may use a variety of guidance and discipline strategies at home, they are expected to respect these prohibitions regarding all children (including their own) while at the Center. Teacher and Directors will discuss issues related to guidance.

We will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties in the classroom. We are here to protect and serve all our children and families. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior that continues to disrupt the physical or emotional well-being of other children and staff may require consultation, intervention, and, if necessary, termination of services. It is advised that children exhibiting difficult behavior spend more on-on-one time with parents or significant adults in their lives rather than an excessive amount of time (beyond 9 – 9 1/2 hours per day) in group care.

If a child's developmental needs are beyond the scope of what JRELC is able to offer or if a child continues to exhibit unacceptable or inappropriate behavior, JRELC reserves the right to suspend or discontinue services for that child. While it is our goal to meet the individual and varied needs of each child, we cannot allow one child to continually behave disrespectfully or exhibit physical force towards teachers and others.

### **Discontinuation of Service**

JRELC reserves the right to discontinue childcare services for any child for reasons included but not limited to the following:

- Non-payment, or excessive late payment of tuition
- Failure to provide required immunization and health documents
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff, children, or other parents by a child and/or family member
  - If a parent or guardian exhibits behavior that is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children or staff in a classroom, or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the classroom, s/he will be given one week's notice and asked to find alternate child care services. In an instance in which a parent is deemed verbally or physically hostile or abusive to center staff, children, or other families the center reserves the right to take measures to maintain a harmonious and safe center environment and child care may be terminated immediately.
- Refusal to abide by program policies
  - Failure of a parent to abide by center policies and procedures may result in the parent's being asked to find alternate child care. Disregard of center policies and procedures might include, but are not limited to: delinquent payments; leaving a child past closing time; leaving a child unattended; endangering the well-being and safety of children; parents' reluctance to provide information or seek assistance for their child; failure to comply with agreed upon plan of action relating to child's behavior; failure to submit or update medical forms; arriving or departing with a child while under the influence of substances that leave the parent incapable of safely caring for a child.
- If we decide that the center, child, or family is not benefiting from the arrangement. Child care may be terminated for the following reasons:
  - Non-participation in the Family Involvement Program. Please refer to Family Involvement Commitment that was signed during enrollment.
  - If a child's behavior indicates s/he is not adjusting to the program, has needs the program cannot fill or accommodate, or is detrimental to the functioning of the class as a whole. Staff members will hold consultations with staff, parents, and professionals in order to determine if the child would be better served by another program. If it is determined the center cannot serve the child's needs, or if a child significantly disrupts the

program for other children, parents will be given two weeks to find alternate child care.

### **Back to Sleep Requirements/ SIDS Policy**

State of Alabama Department of Human Resources and our accrediting agency, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, requires all infants younger than 12 months will be required to be placed on their back for sleeping. Any exceptions to this must be by written authorization and confirmation by child's pediatrician. When a child can turn over alone, we will continue to place the child on their back to sleep. However, an infant may adjust to a different position on their own, while in the crib.

### **Hiring Staff by Parents**

JRELC teaching staff is hired based upon their education and expertise within a supervised and managed environment. We strongly discourage our employees from making independent child care arrangements with families at the center. However, in the event that you enter into an agreement with a JRELC employee to babysit for your family outside of the employee's normal work hours and/or outside of the school hours, it must be done away from the center and with the full knowledge and understanding that the sitter enters into such an agreement as a private citizen and not as a JRELC employee. We cannot be responsible for our employees away from school, outside their working hours, and will not be liable for their acts or omissions when not on our property including the transportation of children. You may be required to sign acknowledgement and waiver to this effect.

### **Quality Assurance**

James Rushton Early Learning Center is committed to providing a high-quality program that meets to the greatest extent possible children's and family's needs.

### **Parent Concerns**

As an early learning center, we are a community of children, parents, and staff all interacting and sharing our lives together. In a community, people work closely together and hopefully interactions are positive, helpful, kind, and understanding. Yet, it is to be expected that from time to time, people will experience some conflict, concerns, and difficulties. We recognize that parenting is one of the most difficult, intense, and rewarding experiences in your life. We want you to share your thoughts, hopes, and dreams for your child. You want what is best for your child, and we know it is your job to advocate and protect your child. We, as a staff, will make mistakes; create misunderstandings, and occasionally miscommunicate. When these mistakes occur, we want you to tell us. As a staff, it is our goal to offer your family the best child care services possible. In order to meet our goal, we need your input, your suggestions, your questions, and concerns. When you have a concern please remember:

- Teachers want the parents to feel very satisfied with the care their child is receiving.

- Realize that if you have a concern with a teacher, the director will need to investigate and talk with the teacher directly about your concern and deal with the issue in a straightforward manner, so the teacher can share her perspective, improve performance and/or correct any mistakes.
- Sometimes we cannot make changes you may request due to other restrictions, but we ALWAYS want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.

In case of concerns, discuss the situation with your child's teachers. While viewpoints on specific situations do vary, all staff is expected to be responsive to parent concerns and willing to consider various ways to meet the needs of children and families. Because communication is sometimes not easy, a parent may need to try again to let a teacher know what he/she would like to happen. Please listen to the teacher's suggestions and respect his/her professional judgment. While teachers will try to be responsive to individual expectations, they must also consider the needs of all the children in the classroom as well. If a problem is not resolved, please discuss the situation with a Director. If the family is not satisfied after conferring with the director, they should express their concerns to the Executive Director.

### **Celebration Guidelines**

Celebrations are a fun way for families to be involved and share their cultures with others in the center. However, they must be restricted to prevent disruption of the normal daily schedule and must include all the children in a class.

If you would like to host a celebration of any kind at school, please make sure the teachers are aware of your intentions and follow these guidelines. In most instances, a party would be held in the classroom during the normally scheduled afternoon snack time. While a scheduled snack is always available, parents may wish to provide a special treat that is not normally part of our snack. Such items must be individually wrapped or provided by a bakery in which ingredients lists are available due to food allergy concerns. Latex balloons are prohibited as they are a serious choking hazard to young children.

### **Birthday Parties**

Parents may send store bought party food and favors (appropriate for the age) for the entire class. The parents may attend or have the teacher serve the snacks during the afternoon snack time. If the parents send party favors and attend the party, the parents will be expected to help clean up after the party. This will allow the teachers to focus their attention on the supervision of the children and to continue with the regularly scheduled afternoon activities and not be burdened with an unusual amount of clean up. Please do not bring or send a party character (clown, dressed character, etc.) to the center. These characters may frighten young children. These should be reserved for your own personal parties outside the school setting. Please do not view your classroom party as your child's primary party. Please limit additional family members and friends to school parties. It is very disruptive for friends and cousins outside of the

classroom setting to be included in classroom parties, because seating is usually limited to the number of children in the class.

### **Holiday Activities**

We request that parents and teachers work together to plan a holiday activity, event or party which will not disrupt the class schedule. Parents are asked to help with decorations, snacks and with clean up if such a party is agreed upon. Instead of individual gifts, we encourage parents to contribute toward a classroom gift that can then be shared by the entire class. Teachers will gladly help with the creation of a “class wish list” for classroom gifts.

### **Teacher Appreciation**

A word or note of appreciation from a parent can be a lasting source of encouragement and inspiration to your child’s teacher. Another option is to give a gift to the classroom as a whole such as books or toys appropriate for the group. We invite families to work together to acknowledge staff during a “Staff Appreciation Week.”

### **Transitions to older classrooms**

As children grow and develop, they will begin to transition/move to new classrooms in our program. As they participate in our program, their needs may be better served by moving to another classroom or staying for a longer time in the current classroom. We will work with each child and with you to make each transition as smooth as possible. These transitions will occur, as space is available and according to DHR guidelines.

### **Outdoor Play**

JRELC provides two safe outdoor areas for children to play. The infant/toddler play area has equipment designed for children of this age. The pre-school play area has equipment and materials designed for older children. Use of the playground is scheduled according to age appropriateness to ensure the safe play of the children.

DHR and NAEYC require that children play outdoors every day except in extremely inclement weather. We do go outside when the weather is cold. Make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor play experiences.

### **Transportation**

JRELC does not transport children.

### **Public Notice**

A copy of the Minimum Standards for Day Care Center and Nighttime Centers-regulations, and Procedures is available in the Center Office or may be obtained by contacting the Department of Human Resources.

Address: Department of Human Resources  
Childcare Services Division  
50 Ripley Street  
Montgomery, AL 36130

Telephone Number:

1-866-528-1694

Complaints regarding known or suspected violation of the Minimum Standards may be reported to the Department of Human Resources at the address and telephone number above.

Information regarding substantiated licensing complaints and violations of the Minimum Standards may be obtained from the Department of Human Resources at the address and telephone number above.



## Acknowledgement of Receiving Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received and read the James Rushton Early Learning Center Parent Handbook. I will ensure that the center maintains current contact information for me at all times. I understand that upon acknowledgement of receiving the handbook I also acknowledge I will follow the policies of James Rushton Early Learning Center.

Signature of Parent Guardian:

---

Print Parent/Guardian Name:

---

Signature of Parent Guardian:

---

Print Parent/Guardian Name:

---

Print Child/Children's Name:

---

Please return this form to the Director or Office Manager.

One must be completed for each child in the program.

James Rushton Early Learning Center

Tuition

\$825 Per month per child

Limited partial scholarships are available.

## James Rushton Early Learning Center Child Care Tuition Agreement

This agreement is being entered into between the Parent / Guardian of (herein after called "Child") and James Rushton Early Learning Center (JRELC).

Term: JRELC agrees to provide services beginning on \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule: The following schedule for arrival and pick up of the child has been agreed upon:

Drop off is no later than 9:00 to maintain a consistent routine for your child and classroom. It is advised that children not be in care for longer than 9 to 9 ½ hours per day.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Arrive					
Depart					

\_\_\_\_\_ Arrival and departure must remain in accordance with the agreed Upon. This schedule allows JRELC to maintain appropriate child to staff ratios as regulated by Alabama DHR.

\_\_\_\_\_ CLOSINGS: The center will be closed on the following holidays: Winter Holidays (to be scheduled each year), Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving.

\_\_\_\_\_ Additionally, we will be closed for staff development dates to be published: Presidents Day, two days during Spring Break, and three days in August.

\_\_\_\_\_ Inclement weather may require that we close or dismiss early. We follow Birmingham City Schools.

\_\_\_\_\_ Agreement to Pay: The parent/guardian agrees to pay

\_\_\_\_\_ Monthly (no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bi-Monthly (1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month)

\_\_\_\_\_ Weekly (Friday BEFORE the next week)

\_\_\_\_\_ Parents may elect to pay tuition via credit card, debit card on -line or At the check in computer in the front lobby.

\_\_\_\_\_ If payments are not received within five (5) days of scheduled Agreement (see above) there will be a \$10.00 late fee charged. With Payments more than two weeks overdue, the child will not be allowed to attend further days until payment is made in full. The child will be dis-enrolled if payment is not received after three weeks of nonpayment.

\_\_\_\_\_ The center's tuition fees are determined based upon the following terms.

\* Full Day

\* Infants (6wks-17mo) \$825

\* Toddlers (18mo – 3yrs) \$825

\* Preschool (3yrs-4yrs) \$825

\* Sibling Discount: There is a 10% discount for the second child of full-pay families.

\_\_\_\_\_ Non-refundable enrollment fee of \$50 must be paid prior to enrollment.

\_\_\_\_\_ A \$30.00 fee will be charged on all returned checks.

\_\_\_\_\_ Tuition payments are due according to the above contract, including Holidays, training dates, and sickness, regardless of attendance.

\_\_\_\_\_ Families receiving assistance from CCC have limited absences for illness only. The parent/guardian becomes responsible for tuition fees charged for absences other than illness. Also, the parent/guardian understands that co-pays are due, as determined by their subsidy program, and must still be made monthly regardless of attendance.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other additional charges that are not covered by CCC or scholarship include late pick up fees, late payment fees, and returned check fees; these fees are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

\_\_\_\_\_ Late Fees: The Parent/Guardian understands that the program hours are 7:00 – 5:45. We close the center promptly at 6:00pm. There is a late fee added per child after 6:00 pm of \$5.00 for the first five minutes and \$1.00 per minute for each minute thereafter. Late payment fees are to be paid no later than the following day the children are in attendance.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our center is open from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Parents are not allowed in the center before it is open or after closing. It's expected that families provide themselves with enough time to speak with staff, pick up their children and exit the center by our closing time of 6:00 pm.

\_\_\_\_\_ Termination: The agreement may be terminated by the Parent/Guardian at any time by giving the center **two weeks prior written notice** of the child's withdrawal for the program. If the parent/guardian does not give **two weeks' notice** before withdrawing the children from the program, or if the child is withdrawn from the program prior to the end of the two week notice period, they shall remain liable to pay the tuition fees through the end of the two week period. This agreement may be terminated by the center at any given time by giving the Parent/Guardian two weeks prior written notice. The Parent/Guardian shall still be obligated to pay the tuition fees through the end of such two week notice period. The agreement may be terminated by the center immediately, without notice, for any one or more of the following reason: a) The parent/guardian fails to pay, when due, any fee or charge or amount of money due to the center per this agreement. b) The parent/guardian breaches any one or more of terms and provisions per this agreement or policies set forth in the Parent Handbook. c) If, in the sole judgment and discretion of the center, the program is unable to meet the specific needs of the child without disrupting the overall daily routine of the program. d) If, in the sole judgment and discretion of the center, the child's conduct jeopardizes the safety or health of themselves, any staff member, or another child, or unreasonably disrupts program activities. e) If a parent/guardian picks up a child past the center's 6:00 pm closing time more than three times within six-month period.

Miscellaneous:

\_\_\_\_\_ If the center refers the account to a collection agency or attorney for collection, the parent/guardian agrees to pay the costs and expenses associated with using these services.

\_\_\_\_\_ The center does not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or special needs.

\_\_\_\_\_ The center is not responsible for personal articles brought into the center property which are lost, stolen, or damaged. All belongings are to be labeled for each child by the Parent or Guardian.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Parent/Guardian understands the staff and Director remain in mandated reporter status while employed by JRELC and are obligated by law to report suspected child abuse and maltreatment of children or families enrolled at the center.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Parent/Guardian acknowledges that the center is regulated by The Alabama Department of Human Resources and agrees to abide by all applicable regulations.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by this Tuition Agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE**

---

Scholarship application submitted on \_\_\_\_\_(Date)

Committee reviewed Scholarship application on \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

The Parent/Guardian's method of payment is:

- SELF PAY** \_\_\_\_\_
- SUBSIDIZED** \_\_\_\_\_
- OTHER** \_\_\_\_\_
- SCHOLARSHIP** \_\_\_\_\_

Information reviewed with parent/guardian on \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Notes: