



iUCC
Early
Childhood
Center

Parent Handbook

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Handbook Revision

The Irvine United Congregational Church Early Childhood Center reserves the right to revise, delete, or supplement any provision of this handbook when it deems such changes appropriate. Policy changes will be posted in the office for 30 days.

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A WELCOME MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

The Early Childhood Center was started by a member of our church, Ruby Fulton, as a place where children could learn together while embracing the values of diversity, tolerance, and acceptance. Our children come from a rich variety of backgrounds, and from the sounds I hear coming from their classrooms, they are full of enthusiasm, eager to learn, and delighted by the friendships they have formed.

I credit a dedicated staff and a thoughtful Child Care Committee for creating and maintaining such a healthy and vibrant preschool. I am proud of the reputation we have earned over the course of many years, and I invite you to visit and learn more about us. You will find warm, welcoming staff members who are well organized and work together as a team. You will also witness classrooms full of children enjoying the learning and recreation that we offer through structured and unstructured play.

The Early Childhood Center is an outreach of the Irvine United Congregational Church. We are a proudly progressive and thriving congregation of the United Church of Christ. We believe that whoever you are and wherever you are on your journey, you are welcome here.

On Sundays, the children of our own congregation learn in this same space—they hear stories from the Bible and they learn about respecting people of all faiths and walks of life. Once a month, our music Director teaches them the fundamentals of singing and they learn about music. Children in our congregation learn to help other people and take roles in worship.

I invite you to visit us some Sunday—we are happy to continue the outreach we offer during the week in the spiritual experience of being together in church as a family.

In any case, we are intentional about respecting wherever our families are on their own journeys. Our congregation's vision and mission are reflected in our preschool not through religious instruction, but rather through a commitment to inclusive acceptance of all children and their families. Through our preschool curriculum, we help children to develop respect for others with different cultural backgrounds, abilities, appearances, and experiences. We also help children learn to be good stewards of our environment and all the creatures with whom we share planet Earth. With this foundation, we believe children can grow to be tomorrow's peacemakers.

I know that making the decision to place your most precious young ones in preschool is an important one. Please take a tour and talk with our teachers about this unique place of growth and learning.

Yours truly,

The Rev. Dr. Paul Tellström

A WELCOME MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

The Irvine United Congregational Church (IUCC) Early Childhood Center warmly welcomes you to our preschool. We strive in every way possible to make our relationship with you satisfying and rewarding. Our goal is to provide a loving, nurturing, and educational environment in which your child can grow in confidence, intellect, and character.

The IUCC Early Childhood Center offers a well-balanced, developmental program designed to meet each child's individual needs. We are committed to developing each child's full potential as we provide an enriching program of hands-on experiences. Our curriculum is designed to meet young children's physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

Our preschool family reflects the cultural, ethnic, and family diversity of Irvine and Orange County, California. In our inclusive multicultural environment children develop respect and acceptance for all human beings. In this way, we believe we give children a foundation that promotes human understanding and peace. We invite parents and families to share their knowledge, skills, talents, and cultural traditions in our classrooms to enrich us all.

Our preschool staff are honored and privileged to partner with you in your child's formative early years, and we will work hard to ensure your time with us is a wonderful learning experience.

Thank you for entrusting your child to us, and welcome to our preschool!

Sincerely,

Laura A. Long, Chair
IUCC Child Care Committee

INTRODUCTION TO THE IUCC EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

The Irvine United Congregational Church Early Childhood Center is a year-round early childhood education program for children ages 2 through 5 years old, or the year prior to entering kindergarten. Established in 1986 by the Irvine United Congregational Church (IUCC), the Early Childhood Center (ECC) is committed to providing an enriching, developmentally appropriate early childhood education program as part of the church's progressive Christian service and outreach to the community.

OUR VISION

Children grow healthy and strong in body, mind, and spirit in environments that support their needs and teach them to respect the diversity of humankind and to care for the Earth.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The ECC is dedicated to the well-being of children and families in the Irvine community. We demonstrate this dedication by providing the highest quality preschool experience for children, which we achieve through a caring, cooperative workplace in which human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction and creativity are promoted, positive relationships are modeled, and quality improvement is intentional and continuous.

VALUES

Because of our association with Irvine United Congregational Church and the United Church of Christ, we value the religious traditions and faith journeys of all people. Our preschool is based on spiritual values common to all faith traditions, such as kindness, generosity, empathy, and respect for differences. All families and their children are welcome. We also emphasize good stewardship of the natural environment and gratitude for the blessings all around us.

EARLY EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

The first five years of a child's life are critical for an individual's success in school and in life. Therefore, the ECC provides a loving, safe, secure environment and a creative, enriching curriculum in which young children can develop personal relationships with teachers and other children as they grow in their physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and moral development.

We believe in teaching the whole child through a developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum that fosters children's natural curiosity about the world around them. We believe all children are competent and capable learners and we strive to provide a rich environment to support their learning and development. Our experienced teachers assess each child individually and target areas for growth so each can reach his or her potential and be well prepared to enter kindergarten. We

promote good health, self-awareness, self-worth, competence, resiliency, compassion for others, and a spirit of discovery and life-long learning.

We value families as children's most important educators. The ECC staff and the families we serve have a common interest in their children's welfare, and therefore, we seek an active partnership and collaboration with parents and families. We strive to maintain the highest level of trust and to take parents' and guardians' ideas and concerns seriously.

Every early childhood program operates within a community context. As a mission of the Irvine United Church of Christ, the ECC seeks to be responsive to the needs of our community. We seek to cooperate with agencies, programs, and professionals who share our concerns for children and families. Through our knowledge and expertise in early education, we advocate for the well-being of children everywhere.

CLASSROOMS

The IUCC Early Childhood Center (ECC) offers developmentally appropriate programs for children from age 2 through 5, or the year prior to kindergarten eligibility. Three classrooms are available:

- Toddler: Children 2 to 3 years of age
- Preschooler: Children 3 to 4 years of age
- Pre-kindergarten: Children 4 to 5 years of age

HOURS AND DAYS

The ECC is open year-round from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. A variety of days of attendance are available in each of the classrooms, and children may enroll for a half-day or the full day:

- 5-day program (Monday through Friday), full or part day
- 3-day program (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), full or part day
- 2-day program (Tuesdays and Thursdays), full or part day

A flexible schedule may be available on a case-by-case basis as space and classroom ratios allow.

LICENSE

Since November 1986, the IUCC Early Childhood Center has been licensed to operate by the State of California, Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, Child Care Department. We serve children ages two (2) through five (5) years of age and have a capacity to serve 50 children. Our license number is 300606107. The phone number for Community Care Licensing is (714) 703-2800.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Full-day Schedule

7:00–8:40	Arrival, hand washing; free play is available in a variety of centers in the classroom; children may play outdoors (weather permitting). A variety of large and small motor activities are available.
8:40–9:00	Small group activities or outside play (weather permitting)
9:00–9:30	Hand washing; breakfast
9:30–9:45	Clean-up, toileting, hand washing
9:45–10:00	Circle time
10:00–11:00	Free play/Classroom activities
11:00–12:00	Outside play
12:00–12:30	Hand washing; lunch & clean-up
12:30–1:15	Free play/Classroom activities; clean-up
1:15–1:30	Toileting, hand washing, quiet time begins
1:30–3:30	Nap time or quiet time
3:30–3:45	Toileting, hand washing
3:45–4:00	Snack
4:30–5:30	Outside play/Classroom activities
5:30–6:00	Hand washing, free play, good-byes

Toileting, potty training, diapering are done individually, based on the child's needs; in the late fall and winter, children play inside the classrooms after 5:00 p.m.

Half-day Schedule

8:30–9:00	Arrival, hand washing; free play is available in a variety of centers in the classroom; children may play outdoors (weather permitting). A variety of large and small motor activities are available.
9:00–9:30	Hand washing; breakfast
9:30–9:45	Clean-up, toileting, hand washing
9:45–10:00	Circle time
10:00–11:00	Free play/Classroom activities
11:00–12:00	Outside play
12:00–12:30	Hand washing; lunch & clean-up
12:30–1:15	Free play/Classroom activities; clean-up
1:15–1:30	Clean-up, Toileting, hand washing, good-byes

CURRICULUM

The ECC provides learning experiences and creative explorations in all areas of a child's development—social-emotional (sense of self, responsibility for self and others, pro-social behavior, self-regulation), physical (gross and fine motor development), cognitive (learning and problem solving, logical thinking, representational and symbolic thinking), and language (listening and speaking, reading and writing). Art, music, dance, math, science, language/literacy, and active outdoor play are offered through various activities and experiences. Through daily interactions with one another and their teachers, children develop necessary cooperation, conflict management, self-esteem, self-respect, critical thinking, and independence.

Through play, children learn, develop skills and interests, and thrive. Each day at the ECC, children engage in activities individually and in small and large groups based on learning objectives and goals planned for each of them that prepare them for school and life. Our teachers observe the children's interests and take each child's development into consideration when planning curriculum activities. The ECC offers a balanced program of teacher-facilitated and child-initiated activities that respect for children's natural curiosity and thirst for learning. In this way, children learn from each other, from the classroom environment, and from the teachers.

ECC STAFF

The IUCC Early Childhood Center employs professional staff members who meet or exceed California requirements for early childhood program teachers and administrators.

All teachers have completed the required number of college credits in Early Childhood Education and follow a professional development plan in child development for their continuing education and training.

All ECC staff members have been fingerprinted and background checked. Staff also have had a physical examination and have been tested for tuberculosis. A staff member who has CPR and First Aid certified and trained in emergency preparedness is always on site.

Our staff members get to know the children and families in our program, which provides a consistent, secure, and familiar environment for the children we serve.

THE FIRST DAY

Going to preschool can be a big adjustment for young children. We urge you to schedule a visit to meet the teachers and experience the ECC environment before your child formally starts the program. This will increase your child's confidence and interest and may make the first day go more smoothly.

Every child is unique, and some have more difficulty with transitions, with new situations, and with separation from parents and caregivers than others. We respect and support each child's own adjustment to preschool.

ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSION AGREEMENT

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Irvine United Church of Christ Early Childhood Center welcomes all children between the ages of 2 and 5 years of age (or the year prior to kindergarten eligibility). No child may be enrolled without completion of the following forms as required by the ECC and/or the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing:

- Registration Form
- Admissions Agreement
- Consent for Medical
- Emergency Forms
(Identification & Emergency Information)
- Parent Directory
- Preadmission Health History
- Media Release
- Parent's Rights
- Personal Rights
- Physician's Report/Record of Immunization
- Record of Immunization
- Sun Screen Authorization
- Tuition Schedule and Agreement
- Earthquake Supplies Form
- Permission to Email Tuition Receipts
- Walking Field Trips Permission Form
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

By signing the enrollment forms, the enrolling parent of legal guardian certifies that he/she has legal physical custody and authority for the child.

Parents/guardians must notify the ECC of any change in the information requested on the enrollment application and/or emergency forms. Without current information, the ECC staff may not be able to reach you in case of an emergency or illness. Please keep the ECC informed regarding your current daytime telephone number(s).

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Early Childhood Center does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, or any special needs. However, if a child's special needs require unique therapy and/or staffing, the child will not be enrolled until special arrangements can be made.

Children are admitted on a space available basis. A waiting list is maintained in the office for use when openings arise.

REGISTRATION

An initial family registration fee is due upon enrollment of your child at the ECC. The registration fee is assessed annually, once per family, and is non-refundable. Refer to the tuition fee schedule for the current amount of this fee.

In addition to the family registration fee, a deposit of one-half the monthly tuition for each child enrolled is required to secure the child's place at the ECC. This deposit is credited to the family's account and will count toward the last month's tuition if at least one month's notice is given prior to the child's withdrawal. If at least one month's notice of the child's withdrawal is not given, the deposit will be forfeited.

TUITION

To provide a high-quality, competitive program, the ECC's tuition and fee schedule is examined annually and any required increases are instituted in September.

Monthly tuition is due on or before the first day of each month. The full amount is due on this date regardless of the child's actual start date, and is not prorated. Refer to the tuition schedule for the current tuition for each class, number of days enrolled, and for half- or full-day programs. Tuition is higher for children who are not yet potty-trained.

Payments may be made by check, money order, or credit card and are payable to Irvine United Congregational Church Early Childhood Center. Place your payment in the CHECKS MAILBOX in the ECC office area. Credit card payments are assessed a small service fee to cover bank charges.

The applicable full tuition is required each month regardless of the number of days the child attends the program. No credit or trading of days is allowed if the child is absent due to illness, holidays, staff development days, or other reasons. Absences of more than two consecutive weeks may constitute withdrawal from the program.

A late fee of \$10 will be charged if payment is not received by the fifth (5th) day of the month. A late fee of \$30 will be charged if payment is not received by the fifteenth (15th) of the month. A \$25 fee will be charged for any checks or electronic bank debit payment returned by our bank for any reason, and a money order or cashier's check will be required as replacement payment.

Children may not be permitted to attend the program if payments are delinquent more than fifteen (15) days. This includes any delinquent miscellaneous fees.

Families facing financial difficulties are encouraged to discuss the situation with the Director. If suitable payment arrangements cannot be made, the child's immediate withdrawal will result. Re-enrollment is subject to space availability after all outstanding tuition and an addition family registration fee are paid.

If tuition payments become delinquent, the account may be sent to a collection agency, at the discretion of the IUCC Child Care Committee and/or the program Director.

DISCOUNTS

The ECC offers the following tuition discounts:

- Siblings: a 10 percent family discount is given for families with more than one child enrolled.

- IUCC Members: a \$25 per month discount is provided for children whose parent or legal guardian is a member in good standing of the Irvine United Congregational Church. The pastor or church administrator must verify this qualification. The discount is applied after the child has been in attendance for two (2) months and will be applied to the third month and every month thereafter for the length of the child's enrollment.

REFERRAL INCENTIVE

The ECC values referrals to our program from our current families; therefore, the ECC offers a \$100 referral incentive to any family who refers a new enrolling child to our program and the new child remains enrolled for at least two (2) months. The incentive will be received as a credit on the referring family's tuition account. To receive the incentive, please ask the Director for referral incentive request form.

LATE PICK-UPS

The ECC closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. and all children must be picked up, signed out, and belongings collected by closing time. We understand that emergencies may arise, and ask that you immediately call the ECC office if you know you will be late picking up your child. Late pickups result in additional personnel costs; therefore, a \$2.00 per minute late charge will be assessed to the family's account beginning at 6:01 p.m. according to the clock in the ECC office area.

If a child remains at the preschool longer than 30 minutes past the scheduled closing time without any contact from the responsible parent or family member, and after all emergency options listed on the parent's emergency card have been exhausted, the Irvine Police Department and/or the Department of Social Services will be contacted. Late fees will be assessed.

Recurring parent tardiness in picking up children from the ECC may result in the child's withdrawal from the program.

HOLIDAYS

The ECC will be closed on the following holidays: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; President's Day; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Veteran's Day; Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following; Christmas Eve through New Year's Day.

In addition, the ECC will be closed for two staff development days per year to be scheduled in late August.

When Halloween (October 31) falls on a weekday, the ECC will close at 4:30 p.m.

An annual preschool calendar indicating the exact dates for these closings is provided each September.

No tuition credit is given for any of day when the ECC is closed.

VACATION POLICY

As a courtesy to our returning families, the ECC will prorate monthly tuition for up to one week only for family vacations each calendar year. The child must be enrolled for one 12-month period at the ECC before this vacation credit may be used. Please give the Director one month's notice of when the child will be absent for vacation.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Requests to alter a child's enrollment schedule are subject to space availability and such requests must be made at least two weeks prior to the date when the change is requested to begin. Schedule changes may require reassessment of the final balance deposited in the family's account with the ECC.

FAMILY INITIATED WITHDRAWALS

One month's advance written notice must be given before withdrawing a child from the ECC program. The one-half month's prepaid tuition will be applied to the child's final month's tuition. Failure to provide one month's written notice will result in forfeiture of the prepaid tuition.

ECC INITIATED WITHDRAWALS

The ECC reserves the right to initiate withdrawal of a child from our program for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of tuition or other fees within fifteen (15) days of the due date, or excessive late payments of tuition or fees
- Absence of a child from the ECC program for more than two consecutive weeks without notification
- A child's chronic disruptive behavior that continues after the interventions described below have been followed
- Failure to complete required paperwork in a timely manner
- Repeated late pick-up
- Failure to observe the rules of the ECC as outlined in the admissions agreement, tuition payment schedule, and this parent handbook
- The ECC Director determines that the ECC is unable to reasonably meet the developmental or special needs of a child
- The ECC Director determines that the ECC is unable to meet the needs of the parent, guardian and/or the family
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff members or children by a parent or child
- Termination of the ECC program in which the child is enrolled

WITHDRAWAL FOR CHRONIC DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

The ECC will make every effort to work with parents of children having difficulties at our preschool. Our mission is to serve and protect all children enrolled in our program. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior that has been determined

to be upsetting to the physical and emotional well being of another child or children may require the following actions:

- **Initial Consultation**
The Director may require the parent(s) of any enrolled child to meet for a conference to discuss the problem and define it in writing. Goals will be established and the parent(s) will be involved in creating an approach to solving the problem.
- **Second Consultation**
If the initial plan to help the child is not effective, a second consultation with the parent(s) will be required. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not made.
- **Suspension**
If the previous attempts result in no progress to solve the problem, the child may be suspended from the ECC immediately. The Director has the discretion to immediately suspend a child at anytime if he/she exhibits behavior that is harmful to himself/herself or others. A parent may be notified at anytime when the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that the ECC staff cannot modify. The parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspensions from the program may vary from a few hours to complete withdrawal.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS

VALUE OF PARENTS AND FAMILIES

The ECC is committed to working with families and we strongly encourage parents to participate in our program. **Parents are welcome to visit the ECC at any time.** You are welcome to contact the Director with any concerns or questions.

Your concerns, needs, and desires for your child are important to us. You are encouraged to discuss your child's developmental milestones with your child's teacher or the Director. For any lengthy discussions, please schedule a conference with the teacher and/or Director.

COMMUNICATIONS

Two-way communication is essential between families and the ECC staff members. Please communicate any pertinent information with us regarding your child that may affect his or her behavior at the ECC, such as any illnesses, over-the-counter or prescription medications, changes in sleeping or eating habits, teething, and changes in home situations. In addition, it is critical that you let us know about any changes in address, phone numbers, and/or emergency contact information.

Please contact the ECC Director if you have any concerns about our operations or your child's progress. In addition, the chairperson of the IUCC Child Care Committee and the IUCC pastor are available to assist you with your concerns.

The ECC strives to accommodate any language needs family members may have. Please ask the Director if you need assistance translating any ECC information or communication.

Each month the ECC provides a parent newsletter with information and updates about activities at our preschool. Please review the newsletter because it is one of the prime means of communicating important information with you. You are also invited to follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/iuccpreschool>.

Please check your child's file folder in the classroom each day for any important communications and other information about our program and/or your child's activities and progress. Notifications and helpful information also can be found on the parent bulletin board in our lobby area.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information concerning your child is confidential and will not be released unless a parent or guardian provides written permission. This information includes observations, child assessments, screenings, illnesses and injuries, and registration paperwork. Confidential information is kept in a locked filing system that is accessible only to the Director, teaching staff, and the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing.

Exceptions will be made in the case of suspected child abuse or neglect as reported to proper authorities for investigation.

SHARING CONTACT INFORMATION WITH OTHER ECC FAMILIES

Occasionally, parents request contact information for other families for invitations or play dates. The information you provide on the Parent Directory form at enrollment may be given to another parent unless you specify that you do not wish to share this information.

PARENT/FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Parents are vital partners with the ECC in children's care and development and we encourage parent participation in the program. There are many ways that parents and other family members can support our program. All parents are welcome to visit the program at any time. Spending even a short amount of time with your child during the day makes him or her feel special.

Parents and other family members are encouraged to share personal interests with the children in our program, including hobbies, talents, cultural traditions and customs, favorite recipes, and so on. *(Please note that Community Care Licensing prohibits us from serving any home-prepared foods with children in the program. Only food prepared in our on-site kitchen or that is commercially packaged may be served.)*

If you have something to share with the children, please speak with your child's teacher or the Director.

Other ways to participate in the class program include:

- Reading stories to the children
- Cooking (sharing recipe from culture)
- Planting and weeding the garden
- Helping with a special project or field trip
- Helping with the daily activities of the program
- Collecting materials for class projects
- Minor repairs

Watch the ECC bulletin board, newsletters, and our Facebook page for opportunities for parent involvement. Please do not hesitate to ask your child's teacher or the Director how you can help.

PARENT SURVEY

As part of our quality improvement efforts, the ECC conducts a parent survey each spring to provide an opportunity for families to evaluate our program. Your participation is very important to us, and we hope you will take the time to complete the survey and return it promptly. All comments are confidential.

DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP YOUR CHILD

The ECC opens promptly at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. According to state licensing regulations, no child may be accepted on the premises prior to 7:00 a.m. or stay later than 6:00 p.m. Children attending the half-day program are to arrive no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and depart at 1:30 p.m. We understand that emergencies may happen, but you must contact the center immediately if you cannot arrive by 6:00 p.m. Staff members are required to stay with children until parents arrive, and tardiness results in overtime payments for staff. Therefore, tardy parents will be assessed a \$2.00 late charge for every minute after 6:00 p.m. that they are late. Because tardiness may affect adult-child ratios in the afternoon, the same late charges apply in the half-day program when parents fail to arrive at 1:30 p.m.

Continued tardiness may result in the ECC withdrawing your child from the program.

If a child is left at the ECC after hours with no notification from the parent or guardian, ECC staff will make a reasonable attempt to telephone the parent and other adults listed on Emergency Information Form. If contact cannot be made after a reasonable amount of time, the Director or designated staff member will contact the Irvine Police Department and/or the Orange County Department of Social Services for directions. ECC staff will supervise the child until the situation is resolved.

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES

California state law requires that the child's parent, guardian, or other authorized adult sign the child in when arriving and sign the child out when departing the ECC. The sign-in/sign-out sheet is provided in the office area and has a place for the adult's full legal signature (not initials) and phone number. Please be sure to complete this information legibly because the sign-in/sign-out sheet is a legal document used in case of emergencies and must be accurate. Please do not permit children to write on this sheet.

AUTHORIZATION TO PICK-UP CHILD

No person other than those listed on the registration form will be allowed to pick-up a child from the ECC. Anyone whom you designate to pick up your child must be at least 18 years old. On any day when you will not be picking up your child yourself, please call the ECC office so that we are aware and prepared. Please inform anyone picking up your child that he/she must provide valid photo identification before the child will be released.

Changes to pick-up authorization must be made in writing and will not be made by phone.

California law requires young children to be placed in a proper car seat or booster seat; if ECC staff members observe that car seats are not in place, the child will not be released, and the Department of Social Services will be notified.

No child will be released to any adult suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If an angry or hostile situation occurs, the ECC reserved the right to contact local law enforcement authorities to assist the staff to protect the child, other children, and themselves.

CUSTODY, COURT ORDERS, AND CHANGES OF FAMILY STATUS

The ECC recognizes that in most situations, both parents have a legal right to participate in their child's life. Therefore, when divorce or separation occurs, the ECC will not prohibit either parent from accessing records, participating in conferences, or attending ECC activities, unless a court order states otherwise. The ECC will remain neutral regarding custody issues or other legal matters. Please do not ask teachers or other staff members for verbal or written statements regarding such issues.

If a court order is in place concerning child custody or visitation and the order determines which parent may pick up a child in the ECC program, OR if a court restraining order forbids visitation or contact with a child in our program, the ECC requires the following documentation:

- A letter from the custodial parent stating that the noncustodial parent is not allowed to pick up the child;

- A certified copy, with an original signature and certified seal, of the current court order that states the rights or restraints concerning contact with the child;
- A current photo of the noncustodial parent or other restrained adult to assist with identification.

Any subsequent court order that alters the terms of the original court order will not be honored until it is filed with the ECC Director and verification is provided that the order was filed at the court.

The ECC will not accept information regarding the validity of court orders over the telephone. Only written documentation will be accepted.

Visitation with the noncustodial parent will not be permitted to occur at the ECC.

In divorce or child support disputes, ECC sign-in/sign-out sheets will be released only by court order. A minimum of ten (10) business days is required to process the request because all information concerning other children is confidential and must be blacked out. The requesting parent will be charged 25 cents a page for photocopied documents (8.5 by 14 or smaller) and \$7.50 per quarter hour per person for collecting, preparing, and copying such records. Postage also will be charged if the records must be mailed.

The ECC discourages family members from involving our teachers or staff members in family disputes. If any ECC staff member is subpoenaed to testify in a court matter, the ECC will charge the requesting parent a reasonable fee to compensate for the staff person's time and for the cost of a substitute teacher, if required. The Director will advise of these charges when the subpoena is received.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

We expect parents to observe a certain standard of conduct. The following items are not acceptable in the ECC facility or on the ECC or church grounds:

- Physical or verbal punishment of any children
- Threatening, harassing, or otherwise disrespecting staff, other parents, or children
- Swearing/cursing or threatening/obscene gestures
- Quarreling with other parents or staff
- Making negative or disparaging comments regarding the school to staff, parents, or anyone other than the ECC or church administration (including outside of school)
- Failure to follow policies designated to protect the safety and security of everyone at the ECC

Any violation of this policy will result in the immediate withdrawal of the family.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The ECC believes effective communication is the best way to resolve any disputes or misunderstanding that may arise. We ask parents to follow the ECC's organizational

structure and first to discuss matters with the child's teacher, then the Director, and if necessary the IUCC Child Care Committee chairperson.

We hope that following this chain of command will expedite and clarify situations and avoid additional misunderstandings. Our goal is to ensure your child has the best experience possible at the ECC and for families to be pleased with their choice to entrust their children to our program. We expect all parties to conduct themselves according to the highest ethical standards.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND DISCIPLINE

LICENSING AND HEALTH RULES

The health and safety of all children attending the ECC is a major concern. We ask your cooperation in complying with these guidelines that insure a safe environment for everyone at the ECC. Children who are ill may NOT attend the ECC. If a child becomes ill during the day, he/she will be required to go home. In all cases, the ECC reserves the right to send a child home if he/she has suspicious or prolonged symptoms of illness. The Director or designated staff member has the responsibility to decide whether a child must be sent home, based on her best judgment.

When a child is absent due to illness, the parent must notify the ECC as early in the day as possible. Please notify the ECC immediately if your child has a communicable disease.

Please notify the ECC if your child has an injury that may limit his/her participation in the program (such as a broken bone or sprain). A physician's note is required, stating that the child may attend the ECC and listing any restrictions on the child's activity or participation. Similarly, if your child has had any surgery, including insertion of ear tubes, a physician's release is required listing any restrictions or activities to avoid.

No deductions/reductions in tuition or trading of days is allowed due to a child's illness or injury that results in absence from any part of his/her regularly scheduled attendance at the ECC.

Children must remain with their teachers when parents/guardians arrive to pick them up. Children are not permitted to run through the classroom or play yard to the front door or gate to greet you. You must come to where the child is and then sign him/her out at that time. The parking lot can be busy during pick-up times, and we ask your cooperation in keeping our campus safe. Therefore, please:

- Drive slowly in the parking lot
- Park only in designated parking places
- Turn off your vehicle upon arrival and pick up
- Do not leave children alone in parked vehicles
- Hold your child's hand in the parking lot
- Do not allow your child to run ahead or lag behind you

- Close all doors and gates behind you and make sure they close completely
- Yelling, hitting, or using offensive language is not permitted by adults, staff members, or children at any time

HEALTH ASSESSMENTS, ALLERGIES, AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Prior to enrollment, a Health Evaluation Form (Physician's Report) signed by the child's physician must be provided for each child. In addition, parents must complete a Health History Form for each child and an Emergency Medical Consent Form authorizing staff members to seek appropriate medical care for the child in case of any emergency. Please indicate any allergies or sensitivities of any kind on the child's Health History Form, and call the Director's attention to these.

The State of California requires children between age 2 and 5 to have received certain immunizations, as follows:

- Three (3) polio
- Four (4) DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis combined)
- Three (3) Hep B (hepatitis B)
- One (1) MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella combined)
- One (1) Hib (*Haemophilus influenzae* type B vaccine; required only for children up to 4 years and 6 months; administered on or after the first birthday)
- One (1) varicella (chicken pox vaccine); this immunization is not required if the child has had the chicken pox disease and this is indicated on the Physician's Report and/or the immunization record signed by the child's physician.

California State law permits the following exemptions from these immunization requirements:

- Medical exemption: A licensed physician (MD or DO) who believes a vaccine is not indicated for a child because of medical reasons may submit to the ECC (via the child's family as needed) a written statement documenting the medical exemption. This statement will be placed in the child's file.
- Personal beliefs exemption: A parent or guardian may seek the child's exemption from immunizations if the immunizations are contrary to his/her beliefs. Effective January 1, 2014, California law (AB 2109) requires documentation that health care practitioners have informed the parents/guardians about vaccines and the diseases they are meant to prevent. Written documentation from the child's health care provider is required for the child's file.

NO SMOKING

California law prohibits smoking at any early childhood center, playground, or surrounding parking lot. Your cooperation is required and appreciated.

SUNSCREEN

Please apply sunscreen to your child before he/she arrives at the ECC. Staff members will reapply sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher later in the day to your child's exposed skin, including but not limited to the face, tops of ears, and bare shoulders, arms, and legs.

The ECC must have on file a completed Sunscreen Utilization Permission Form before any sunscreen will be applied to your child. This form includes your directives concerning the type of sunscreen. If your child requires a specific type or brand, you must provide that product to the ECC.

DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS AND SPECIAL SERVICES

The ECC is committed to serving children with varying needs and abilities. The ECC complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 along with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The ECC will provide reasonable accommodation to children with special needs (physical, behavioral, cognitive, and so on). Close communication with parents/guardians is essential to providing quality care and education.

We recognize that some children may have developmental or behavioral challenges, and we strive to help every child to be successful. If we believe a child should be evaluated in order to receive early intervention services, we will make that recommendation to parents.

If your child already has been evaluated by his/her school district, the Regional Center, or a private agency, we will work with those entities to implement the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Parents are requested to submit to the ECC the child's most recent IEP and to keep the ECC up-to-date on progress and/or changes.

The ECC does not discriminate against children with special needs and will admit any child with special needs on a trial basis of one (1) month. At that period, we will schedule a conference with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss whether the ECC is able to meet the child's needs with the current staffing pattern. If we are unable to meet the child's needs, the family will be given time and assistance to locate more appropriate care.

In some cases a child may require special one-on-one support during the day. If you seek to have a therapist or inclusion facilitator work with your child while at the ECC, please discuss this possibility with the Director. The decision to allow such support for your child is made on a case-by-case basis because we can allow only a limited number of personnel at the ECC at any one time. We require background clearance and emergency information on all individuals working with your child while at the ECC. These persons are not included in the ECC's adult-child ratios and are never left alone with the children in our care.

If any ECC staff member participates in providing information or documentation for a child's upcoming IEP, the parent's account may be assessed a reasonable fee to

compensate the staff member's time for gathering and/or preparing the information. If an ECC representative is requested to attend any IEP meetings, the parent's account will be assessed a reasonable fee to compensate the staff member's time plus the cost of any substitute staffing that may be required. The Director will advise of these charges at the time the IEP meeting is set.

ILLNESSES

When children are first enrolled in an early childhood education program, they may experience more frequent illness. But research shows that those children acquire a stronger immune system and show fewer illness throughout elementary school than children who do not attend child care or preschool.

The ECC promotes a healthy environment and works to prevent the spread of communicable diseases in several ways:

- Staff and children wash hands throughout the day, especially before handling food or eating and after using the bathroom.
- Staff members are trained in preventative health practices and implement Universal Precautions as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Classrooms, toys, and equipment are regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Children with communicable diseases or illnesses are excluded from attending the program until they are well.

The ECC asks that your child remain home if he/she has any of the following:

- A rash of any kind until diagnosed, treated, or declared harmless by a physician
- An early cold (coughing and sneezing) or a very bad cold with purulent discharge
- Difficulty breathing or respiratory illnesses
- Bronchitis (coughing frequently)
- Lethargy, persistent crying, and/or irritability
- Diarrhea or vomiting within 24 hours before attending the ECC
- Red, runny, or matted eyes (symptoms of conjunctivitis or "pink eye"); please call your doctor. The child may return to the program 24 hours after the prescribed medication stops and all redness and discharge is gone.
- Head lice; hair must be free of live lice and dead nits (eggs)
- A temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more or any fever accompanied by a deep cough, ear ache or draining ear, spasms of cough, or sore throat

The ECC is a program for healthy children. A child who is not well cannot benefit from the program and can adversely affect the health of other children and staff members. If you have any doubts about your child's health, please keep your child at home and contact your physician.

If your child becomes ill while at the ECC, you will be promptly notified and we expect you to take your child home as soon as possible. No deductions/reductions

of tuition is allowed due to a child's illness that results in the child's absence from the program.

ILLNESS	CHILD MAY RETURN TO SCHOOL
Chicken pox (varicella)	24 hours after the blisters have crusted over
Conjunctivitis (pink eye) Bacterial or viral	24 hours after treatment has begun
Diarrhea (gastroenteritis)	24 hours after last loose stool or after one normal bowel movement
Fever	24 hours fever-free without the use of fever reducing medicines
Head lice (pediculosis)	24 hours after treatment has begun and nits are gone and home environment has been treated
Hepatitis A	At least seven (7) days after onset of jaundice
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment has begun
Measles (rubella)	At least four (4) days after therapy has started
Meningitis (bacterial)	24 hours after treatment has begun
Mumps	14 days after swelling begins
Pinworms	After treatment is complete and home environment has been treated
Pneumonia	Upon receipt of written note from physician
Ringworm (tinea)	24 hours after treatment has begun
Salmonellosis	24 hours after last loose stool or after one normal bowel movement
Scabies	24 hours after treatment has begun
Strep throat	48 hours after treatment has begun
Vomiting	24 hours after last episode
Whooping cough (pertussis)	At least seven (7) days after therapy has begun

If your child has a contagious illness, you must contact the ECC immediately so that other families can be notified. Your child's name will remain confidential. The ECC may request a written release from your child's physician if a health concern remains unresolved.

ACCIDENTAL INJURIES

The ECC provides an environment of active play for young children, and accidents may occur from time-to-time despite our constant supervision. All ECC staff members are certified in CPR and First Aid and First Aid supplies are readily available.

Staff will follow these procedures when a child is injured:

For a minor accident (scrape, small cut, bruise, etc.):

- First Aid applied
- An “Ouchie Report” is completed and given to the parent

For a minor accident involving head injury, some bleeding, or swelling:

- First Aid applied
- Parent is called—staff and parent determine whether child is to be picked up at that time
- An incident report completed and sent to Community Care Licensing and the parent

For a major accident involving head injury, concussion, or so on:

- First Aid applied
- Parent called immediately and asked to pick up the child if there is serious injury to a body part; 9-1-1 paramedics called in a life-threatening situation, and a doctor’s clearance is required for returning to school.
- An incident report completed and sent to Community Care Licensing and the parent
- A doctor’s clearance is required for a child to return after a serious or life threatening injury accident, such as a suspected broken limb, profuse bleeding, breathing problems, or unconsciousness

If the ECC is unable to reach the parent(s) or guardians, the individuals listed on the child’s emergency card will be contacted. Accurate and current contact information for all those listed on emergency cards is critical and must be kept up-to-date for the children’s safety.

If your child was injured at home, please advise the teachers and/or Director. If the injury required a doctor’s care, the ECC may request a note from the physician stating that your child is able to attend the program and any restrictions that may be applicable.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE

Medications (both prescription and non-prescription) may be given only upon written instructions and authorization from the parent/guardian and directions from the child’s physician. Prescription medications must be in the original container and labeled with the child’s complete name, medication name, recommended dosage, time intervals for administration, method of administration, expiration date, and the prescriber’s name, license number, and phone number.

Non-prescription medications (over-the-counter) must be in the original container and labeled with the child’s name and accompanied by the written instructions for administration from the child’s physician. Such medications will be stored according to the instructions on the label, kept beyond the reach of children, and returned to the parent/guardian when no longer needed or upon request. Do not put any medications in your child’s cubby.

If a child develops symptoms that indicate a need for over-the-counter medication (Tylenol or Motrin) while at the ECC, such medication may be given under oral instructions from the parent/guardian for that day only and on an emergency basis while waiting for the parent/guardian to pick up the child. The Director will document that the parent gave verbal approval. Topical ointments may be applied as needed for protection against diaper rash under written instructions from the parent/guardian.

Medication Request Forms are available on the sign-in table and should be completed and returned to the Director or the child's teacher.

Please inform the ECC if your child is taking any prescription or non-prescription medication, even if the ECC is not administering the medication during the child's time at the center. Some medications may cause drowsiness or interfere with the child's ability to participate in daily activities. If your child becomes lethargic or falls asleep during class time, we may call you to pick him or her up.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

California law requires any child care custodian who has knowledge of or observes a child in his/her professional capacity or within the scope of his/her employment whom he/she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect to report the known or suspected instance to Child Protective Services immediately.

Parents or guardians who encounter difficulties providing for their children's emotional and physical needs and safety are encouraged to ask for help. Contact the Director or the church pastor for community resources that can offer assistance.

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

Irvine United Congregational Church (IUCC) is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which all people are welcomed and all can learn about and experience God's love. IUCC celebrates freedom, inclusion, and diversity of belief, and recognizes love as the creative and supporting force in life. Therefore, in 2013, IUCC established and adopted a Safe and Healthy Church Community Policy to protect the physical and emotional safety and well being of all members of the church community, including the ECC.

IUCC is committed to creating and maintaining program, facilities, and a community in which members, visitors, friends, staff, volunteers, and clergy can worship, participate in fellowship activities, learn and work together in an atmosphere that is free from all forms of abuse, discrimination, harassment, exploitation, intimidation, and coercion. Behaviors that constitute abuse, discrimination, harassment, exploitation, intimidation, and coercion are prohibited by church policy and will not be tolerated.

IUCC encourages its employees and leaders to nurture safety by being attentive to self-care, by educating themselves, and by maintaining appropriate boundaries. Employees will be taught, with the goal of a thorough understanding of the

importance referring those in need to supportive, helpful, and appropriate resources.

More information about the IUCC safe church policy is available on the church website (www.iucc.org) or from the pastor or Child Care Committee chair.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The ECC reserves the right to close with or without notice in the case of extreme weather or any other unexpected situation when necessary. Every attempt will be made to notify parents when an unexpected closure is required. Parents and/or the child's emergency contact will be expected to make every effort to pick up the child as soon as possible.

The ECC has established an emergency care and disaster action plan in the event of a disaster such as an earthquake when children are at the ECC, which is posted in each classroom. In such an event, the ECC is prepared to care for children for up to 72 hours, and emergency supplies are in place, including First Aid materials, tools, food, and water. Parents are asked to purchase an Emergency Survival Kit for each child upon registration with the ECC. Please keep a minimum of one (1) full change of clothes in your child's cubby at all times.

Staff is required to stay with and meet the physical and emotional needs of the children. In case of evacuation, the location will be posted on the doors and/or gate and parents/guardians will be notified by text, email, or phone.

Do NOT call the ECC or church. If the phones are working, we will need to keep the lines clear for emergency calls only.

We urge all families to plan what you will do if a disaster strikes during a time when you are separated at work and school.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

The ECC seeks to work with the child to develop internal control of his/her behavior (self-discipline and self-regulation) within the normal bounds of a child's developmental stage and maturity level. We want to encourage children to become creative, independent, and responsible human beings, which means making responsible choices and accepting the consequences of those choices.

Teachers assist children to develop internal control and to make good choices in the following ways:

1. Environment—the ECC is designed for children's hands-on experiences; materials and equipment are child-sized to minimize frustration and maximize success.
2. Logical rules—children at the ECC help to create classroom rules, such as "keeping our hands to ourselves" and "taking care of our learning environment," and the reasons for these rules are discussed.
3. Curriculum—the activities and program at the ECC are developmentally appropriate and based on the children's interests.

4. Positive behavior—ECC teachers reinforce positive behaviors with praise and encouragement. We “catch” children making good choices.
5. Redirection—engaging a child in another activity often can eliminate potential conflicts or difficulties. Teachers may ask a child to help with a task or join her in a different play activity.
6. Positive reminder—ECC teachers avoid using negative commands (no, don’t, stop); instead we tell the child what we expect. For example, instead of saying “No running!” the teacher may say “Use walking feet in the classroom.”
7. Natural consequences—we allow natural consequences for choices whenever possible; for example, a child who inappropriately throws a toy, may lose a turn with that toy.
8. Involving the child—we encourage the child to participate in conflict resolution or behavior management, which develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
9. Thinking time—sometimes a child needs to be removed briefly from a situation to relax, take a break, and consider a different choice. When the child is ready, we encourage him/her to try again.

Any ongoing guidance situations will be discussed with parents or guardians to ensure a cooperative approach. Please do not hesitate to discuss any questions or concerns about your child’s behavior with your child’s teacher or the Director.

No corporal punishment is ever allowed at ECC, including negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching). Children are never humiliated, ridiculed, threatened, coerced, or subjected to abusive language.

BITING

Biting among young children in a group setting is a common yet frightening behavior. Biting can occur without warning. For many toddlers, the biting stage is a passing problem as the child learns socially acceptable behaviors. For other children, biting may be persistent and chronic. Children may bite for a variety of reasons, including teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, stress, change in the home or center environment, feeling threatened, or need for a sense of power.

All incidents of child biting, regardless of how big or how small, will be reported and shared with the parent. Our goal is to work diligently and collaboratively with the child and family to identify possible causes of biting and address the situation. The child’s teacher and the Director will meet with the parent(s) to develop a 60-day family-teacher action plan. However, if there is no significant change (less biting or no biting) by the end of the 60 days, the parent will be notified to withdraw the child and seek services in a more appropriate environment.

GENERAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

SECURITY

The security of the ECC building and play yard is safeguarded at all times. All visitors—including parents, guardians, and family members—are asked to use the ECC's front entrance and to check in with the Director or other staff member on duty upon arrival. The front door and gates to the play yard are kept locked at all times. Access through the front door is allowed by an electronic keypad. Please do not share the code with anyone outside the ECC community.

CHILD ASSESSMENTS AND PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Beginning in 2015, parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year to discuss your child's activities in our program and parent-teacher observations of his/her growth and development. These conferences are not mandatory, but highly encouraged. Of course, parents may request a conference with the child's teacher and/or the Director at any time as needs arise.

In addition, the ECC conducts an assessment of each classroom and the outdoor environment twice a year with the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale for children birth to 2½ years of age and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale for children 2½ to 5 years.

The rating scales are organized into seven subscales;

- Space, Furnishings, and Display for Children
- Personal Care Routines
- Listening, Talking, and Language Reasoning
- Learning Activities
- Interactions
- Program Structure
- Adult Needs, Parents and Staff

Each classroom is assessed with the appropriate tool and rated on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest score. The ECC staff and the IUCC Child Care Committee utilize the classroom assessments to guide future planning of activities, materials, and use of classroom space for the children.

TOILET-TRAINING

ECC staff members are pleased to help your child to learn to use the toilet when he or she is developmentally ready and interested in the process. We focus on positive reinforcement, and we seek to work closely with families during this time. We will do our best to support your at-home efforts. Please let us know when you are beginning the toilet-training process at home so that we can provide consistency between home and preschool.

Clothing that is easy to manage encourages your child's independence and self-help. Accidents may be prevented if children can unbutton and unbuckle pants and belts

without a struggle. Sweat pants or those with an elastic waist are the best bet. Please be sure there are extra underwear and clothing in your child's cubby during the learning process.

Parents of children who are learning to use the toilet must provide an adequate supply of commercially available disposable diapers and/or Velcro pull-ups and diaper wipes. Parents also must provide two (2) complete changes of clothing and appropriate outdoor wear.

A child is considered to be completely toilet trained when he/she:

- is able to recognize when he/she needs to go to the toilet
- is able to control his/her bladder and bowel movements until getting to the toilet
- does not need to wear pull-ups during the day (other than nap time)
- does not need a teacher to remind or assist in any part of the toileting process

When the child is completely toilet trained, the regular tuition rate will be applied.

CLOTHING AND SHOES

The ECC offers a variety of indoor and outdoor activities and active play. Children should be dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes and shoes that are appropriate for climbing, cycling, sand play, painting, gardening, and other activities that may be messy. Dress your child in clothing suitable for the weather.

Provide a complete change of clothing for your child to be kept in his/her cubby in case the child gets wet, dirty, or otherwise soils his/her clothing. A complete set includes shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and a light jacket or sweater. Label your child's clothing to avoid confusion. If soiled clothing is sent home, please provide a clean set the next school day.

Select rubber-soled shoes or sneakers for your children to wear to the ECC. Children should not wear flip-flops, sandals with no ankle strap, jellies, crocs, open-toed shoes, platform shoes, roller shoes, boots, dance shoes, or dress shoes to the ECC. These types of shoes are inappropriate for active play and may be uncomfortable, slippery, and unsafe.

No super hero clothing or clothing with weapons or depicting violence (t-shirts, sweatshirts, jackets, hats, or pants) are allowed at the ECC. Children wearing these types of clothing tend to play games that are inappropriate and unsafe in our program and do not support our philosophy of peaceful cooperation.

CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS

The ECC is not responsible for the safekeeping of any of a child's belongings brought to the preschool, including clothing. Please mark all personal belongings clearly with your child's name.

NAPTIME

Rest or quiet time is an important part of a child's day at the ECC. This time each afternoon provides an opportunity for your child to re-energize and gain self-control. Naptime is scheduled between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. Each child is provided with an individual cot and a clean sheet. Parents are required to supply a light blanket. A small pillow or sleep toy may be included if desired. No child is required to sleep, but they must rest quietly for a period of time. Sheets are laundered once a week. If a child does not have a blanket, one will be supplied and the parent/guardian will be assessed a \$1 per day until a blanket is provided.

NUTRITION PROGRAM

The ECC offers a hot breakfast and hot lunch, which the ECC cook prepares with fresh ingredients in our on-site kitchen. In addition, we offer an afternoon snack each day. This nutrition program is currently included in the tuition. Daily menus for each month are posted in the ECC office area.

Our nutrition program promotes healthy eating habits and good nutrition. A variety of foods are offered to increase the children's awareness and experience with different food groups and various ethnic groups. We use fresh fruits, vegetables and dairy products, and our menus follow the national health and safety performance guidelines established for early childhood education programs.

All meals are served family style with teachers sitting with the children to encourage conversation and good table manners. According to their abilities, children serve themselves and help to clean up after the meal or snack. Children are encouraged to try all foods, but are never forced to eat anything.

We follow these guidelines:

- Meals are as fresh and homemade as possible, and are prepared just before serving.
- 1% milk is served at breakfast and lunch to each child.
- Breakfasts include: milk, fruit or vegetable juice (100%), bread and/or whole-grain or enriched cereal (cold/dry or hot/cooked).
- Lunches include: milk, cooked lean meat, fish, or poultry or meat alternative (cheese, egg, cooked dry beans or peas, nuts and/or seeds), fruit and/or vegetable (two or more), bread or bread alternative
- Snacks may consist of: milk, lean meat or meat alternative or yogurt, juice (100%), bread and/or cereal
- Children are served a variety of rice (both white and brown) and breads.
- Fresh fruit is served often for both lunch and snack.
- Fresh-cut vegetables are served both separately and mixed into foods to enhance the nutritional value.
- Meals are individually planned and changed rather than repeated each month to give a variety of choices.
- Snacks are balanced with appropriate amounts of fruits, liquids, and starches.
- Juices served are 100% juice. No sugars, fructose or corn syrup are added.

- We always take notice of any child who is vegetarian, has specific food allergies, and/or special dietary needs.

Parents have the option of sending a lunch from home with their child. No discount or refund is given for selecting this option. Please help us promote healthy food choices with the selections you include in your child’s lunch box. We encourage you to include:

- Protein such as meat, fish, egg, legumes, or cheese
- Whole grain or enriched bread or bread alternative
- A dairy product (yogurt, cheese) or comparable if lactose intolerant
- Fresh fruits and vegetables

We are happy to warm any items you wish to include, but please do not send frozen meals. Include a small icepack to keep your child’s lunch chilled, and label the lunch box and all containers you wish to keep. Do not include glass containers or bottles.

The following items are not served at the ECC because they are choking hazards or represent poor food choices. If children bring any of these items to the ECC, they will be set aside and sent home at the end of the day as an “at-home food”:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Hot dogs and carrots, unless cut into strips | • Candy |
| • Cherry tomatoes or grapes, unless cut into halves | • Gum |
| • Nuts, unless they are not a choking hazard | • Soda |
| | • Peanuts or peanut butter |
| | • Popcorn |

Please inform the ECC about any food allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have. We want to work with you to protect your child and will post allergy/food restriction lists in each classroom as a visual reminder for all.

ANTI-BIAS/MULTICULTURAL POLICY

The ECC reflects and promotes the open, affirming, and inclusive values of the Irvine United Congregational Church. Like IUCC, we teach children to challenge discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes as they grow to respect and understand others. The ECC intentionally incorporates a culturally diverse, anti-bias philosophy in our classroom materials and curriculum activities. ECC staff members are trained to be sensitive to differences in abilities, ethnicities, nationalities, languages, and family constellations as they interact with adults and children in our program.

Although we are directly associated with IUCC, a congregation of the United Church of Christ, the ECC affirms the values common to all religions, faiths, and people of good will, such as compassion, generosity, forgiveness, and peace. Because we respect diversity, when children ask questions regarding opinions on personal or religious beliefs, we will refer them to their parents.

SHARE DAYS/TOYS FROM HOME

Share days are special learning opportunities for the children. Teachers will inform you when share days are scheduled. Share days encourage interest in life, build self-esteem, self-awareness, self-discovery, social skills, and enhance vocabulary and knowledge.

Please ensure that your child's name is on any item he or she brings to share.

Guns, swords, and any toy that could hurt another child are not allowed. Cartoon, video-games and/or super hero inspired toys often encourage specific types of play that is not conducive to the open-ended activities that we offer with the toys and equipment we provide. Unsuitable items like these will be put aside until your child is picked up for the day.

If you have any questions about what may be suitable for share days, please speak to your child's teacher or the Director.

WALKING FIELD TRIPS

Field trips within walking distance of the ECC are an important part of our curriculum and are planned throughout the year. No child may participate in a field trip unless his/her parent has signed a permission slip provided in the registration packet. Parents are welcome to join us on the field trip and may assist to supervise some of the children.

Smoking is never permitted at any time on the ECC campus or on field trips. Please do not use your cell phone while on the field trip except in an emergency.

Children with special needs may participate in field trips if a parent attends as a chaperone. The child's aide or inclusion facilitator may also attend with the parent.

TRANSITION TO A NEW CLASSROOM

Because ECC may enroll children throughout the year, children may be transitioned to the next classroom when they are age-eligible, developmentally prepared, and when space is available.

Before transitioning to a new classroom, the child will be gradually introduced to the new teacher and the new room. The child may make several visits to the new classroom before making the final transition.

If a child is ready to transition to a new classroom, we will notify parents by letter and provide helpful transition information. Parents are encouraged to meet the new teacher prior to the transition and ask any questions they may have regarding the new classroom.

BOOK ORDERS

Each month, ECC will provide a Scholastic Book order form for you and your child to select books to buy if you wish. Book orders are due by the date specified on the form. Please make a separate check payable to *Scholastic Books* and submit it with

your order. Families also have the option of ordering online; refer to the information on the book order form. A wonderful variety of high-quality books are available, and we hope you will take advantage of this program to build your child's home library. Reading to your child also builds strong bonds and fosters early literacy, vocabulary, and imagination.

CHILD BIRTHDAYS

We love birthdays at the ECC! Your child will feel very special as he/she celebrates with friends at preschool. Teachers will make sure your child feels special on his or her day. Please speak to your child's teacher well in advance to schedule your child's birthday celebration.

You may wish to donate a favorite book to the class and put an inscription in the front of the book to commemorate the occasion. The book will be read during class time on your child's birthday. Parents also may supply special healthy treats to be shared with their classroom friends at snack time. These treats may be cookies, whole fruits, or other healthy items. Items should be commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers rather than home-baked items. Take into consideration that some children may have dietary restrictions. Remember our policy of low-sugar.

For safety reasons, do not provide balloons, party favors, or hard candy as these may present a choking hazard. Candles are prohibited.

If you are having a private outside party for your child, please do not send party invitations to school unless you are inviting the entire class. If you intend to invite only a few children, please mail the invitation directly to the children's homes or send direct emails to their parents. Our office staff will be happy to provide you with home or email addresses for those families that have authorized us to share this information.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Seasonal, religious, and civic holidays may be recognized and discussed within a developmentally appropriate curriculum, but these events are not the main focus of the ECC's classroom activities. For example, teachers may provide opportunities to learn about harvest celebrations around Thanksgiving time, or may offer activities with pumpkins in October. Rather than make holidays a direct part of our curriculum, we invite families to share their holiday traditions with the children in the classroom. Our Director and teachers can help you plan an appropriate presentation and/or activity. In this way, we honor our values of inclusion and acceptance.

CAR SEAT LAW

California law requires that all children be correctly restrained in a child safety seat or boosters seat in the back seat of the car until they are 8 years old or 4-feet 9-

inches tall. The ECC staff is mandated by state law to contact Child Protective Services and the local police concerning any person not conforming with this law.

KIDS' NIGHT OUT

Occasionally during the year, the ECC may offer a "Kids' Night Out" for children ages 2 and older. For a nominal fee, children are provided dinner and various activities from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the ECC facility so that parents and guardians may pursue adult activities. Non-enrolled siblings and guests are welcome to attend but must complete a registration packet.

Space is limited at Kids' Night Out, and a sign-up sheet must be completed before each event.

The program ends promptly at 10:00 p.m., and parents/guardians who are late picking up children will be charged \$1 per minute beginning at 10:01 p.m., according to the clock in the ECC office.

FUNDRAISERS

Occasionally, the ECC may have a fundraiser to enhance the overall program or purchase equipment, books, and provide staff trainings. We encourage your participation, but understand you may have other obligations.

BABY-SITTING AND OUTSIDE ASSOCIATION

Young children often become closely connected with their ECC teachers, which may lead parents to seek to employ a teacher to babysit or instruct their child privately or to invite the teacher to a social gathering outside of the preschool. For the protection of children, families, and the ECC, we strongly discourage any such activity.

CELL PHONES

Cell phone usage is not permitted in the ECC. Please refrain from using your cell phone when delivering your child to the ECC and picking him or her up at the end of the day. Your child needs your full attention during these important transitional times and staff members also may need to speak with you.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Children occasionally may be photographed in their classrooms or the play yard. We post these candid photos at the preschool and may use them in our newsletter, Facebook page, web page, or in promotional literature. Children are never identified by name.

The ECC registration materials include a form in which parents may grant their general permission for the ECC to use photographs of their children in this way. You may choose to decline this permission.

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PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I have received and read this Parent Handbook from the IUCC Early Childhood Center and agree to abide by its contents as a condition of my child's enrollment at the ECC. I agree to keep this handbook and any updates that may be provided and to review these as needed throughout my child's enrollment at the ECC. I also acknowledge that the handbook is available on the ECC's website for my reference.

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Parent/Guardian's Printed Name

Date

Please detach this page, sign the agreement above and return to the ECC Director.