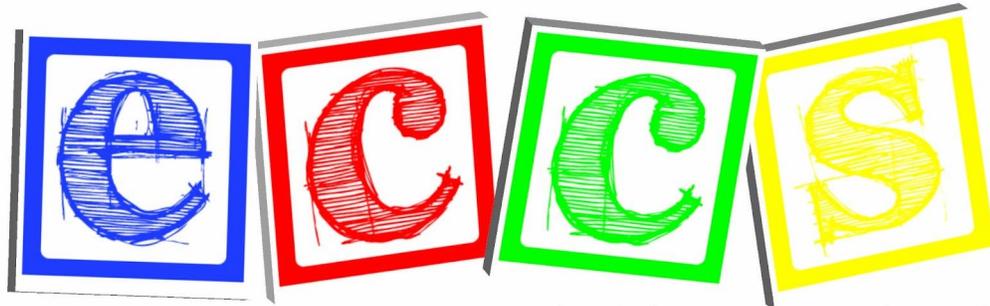


Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook



Ennis Community Children's School
est. 1982

Parent Handbook

2020-2021

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

MISSION STATEMENT

The overall mission of the Ennis Community Children's School is to increase our children's perception of the world around them and become enthusiastic learners. Through activities and play, we aspire to prepare children for educational and lifetime successes with the assistance of parents and the community. We are challenged to provide a child-centered environment to help build critical thinking skills, develop positive self-concepts, facilitate independence and foster cooperation and participation.

FACILITY QUALIFICATIONS

The Ennis Community Children's School is governed and licensed by the Montana Department of Family Services. Under their jurisdiction, we are a licensed day care for children 2-11. The family membership is open to all children and their parents regardless of sex, race, handicap, religion or national origin. Each year the facility is inspected for fire, health and safety, record-keeping, and curriculum content by the State Fire Marshal, County Sanitarian and the County Health Inspector/Nurse.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

The staff of ECCS includes a director, primary caregivers (teachers) and aides. The positions have varying roles and experience in childcare. All staff members work together to develop and implement the curriculum and daily structure of activities for the facility.

Maggie Dodson, Director

Paige Dickinson, Teacher

ROLE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

Chairperson- Responsible for public relations, board meetings, fundraising and contributions, legal documents, building maintenance, health and safety and general administration.

Vice Chairperson- Responsible for conduct of all school employees.

Secretary- Responsible for correspondence, board minutes, and administrative records.

Treasurer- Responsible for accounts payable and all other disbursements, financial records and reports, and overview of Bookkeeping staff.

Board Members at Large- Responsible for fundraising activities and for the organization and facilitation of the School.

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

Staff- Responsible for daily activities, scheduling field trips, discipline, testing and records, and health and safety of children.

Chairperson:

Justin Edge

Vice-Chairperson:

Allison Treloar

Secretary/Treasurer:

Megan Slevin

Members at Large:

Jackie Lev

Nikki Schlessner

Sara Racine

Communication to all board members: boardofdirectors.eccs@gmail.com

GOALS OF THE FACILITY

The goals of our activities reflect the philosophy of the Montana Early Learning Standards which is to promote the social, emotional, intellectual (cognitive) and physical development of each child. These standards "ensure that children from birth to age five have the skills and knowledge they need to achieve success in learning and reach their full potential in life". While striving to attain maximum development in these areas, our overlying concern is with the child's self-esteem. Montana Early Learning Standards can be found at opi.mt.gov/curriculum/earlychildhood.

The most important goal of our early childhood activities is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging children to be creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We are teaching them how to learn, not just in a day care facility, but all throughout their lives. We are allowing them to learn at their own pace and in ways that are best for them. We are helping them learn good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will make a difference throughout their lives. Our activities identify goals in all areas of development:

- **Social:** to help children feel comfortable in their environment, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

- **Emotional:** to help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.
- **Cognitive:** to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- **Physical:** to help children increase their large and small muscle skills, and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and talk with children, are all designed to accomplish the goals of our child care facility and give your child a successful start in learning.

The play world is the child's natural medium for personal growth and positive learning. Young people are the masters of this magic realm- they play and are the most influenced by play. Their play is both serious business and pure fun. At its heart, it signifies nothing less than how they will be in this world.

DAILY SCHEDULE

We are open from 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Monday through Friday. We are closed on all major holidays and some days preceding or following. Any closures will be made known in advance and in writing. Since we concentrate our most structured learning play between 8:30 and 11:00, we ask that all children are given the chance to participate by being dropped off by 8:30. This ensures that your child will get the most out of the morning routine, as well as giving respect to the children already present, so they are not interrupted in their focused activity.

A typical day might look like this:

7:30	Children arrive and begin morning activities
8:30	Morning Circle
9:00	Small Groups
9:30	Centers (Snack available)
10:15	Small Groups
10:45	Outside Time
12:00	Lunch
12:30	Story Time
12:45	Rest Time
1:45	Quiet Activities (Snack available)
3:15	Outside Time
4:45	Centers
5:30	Close

We do not try to rush through an activity to fit more in one day. If an activity is going well and

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

children are interacting, we let the project go on for a while. We strive to learn to read the moments of good interaction between children, as they learn much about life from this.

ECCS CLOSURES

ECCS is closed for Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, Christmas, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day and weekends. Please pay attention to the monthly activity calendar as it is intended to inform you of any upcoming ECCS closures, as well as scheduled Ennis Public School District closures. If an emergency closure occurs at ECCS, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible. We will send out surveys to assess further closures around holidays.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Rates: Two days per week: \$250 per month
 Three days per week: \$375 per month
 Five days per week: \$600 per month
 \$35 per day for drop-in (if space is available)- Billed at the end of the month

A 25% discount rate is given on second (or more) children.

A \$25.00 late pick-up fee will be charged to your bill if you are not present at ECCS by **5:30 pm** to pick-up your child.

Scheduling and Payment Policy

Our scheduling policy has evolved to accommodate the needs of parents in the community. We ask that you adhere to the following guidelines to assist our teachers in being prepared as well as ensuring we are properly staffed.

- All children in attendance **MUST** be signed in and out daily by a parent or other authorized person (see parent permission form) using the Tadpoles app on the iPad. If a parent has multiple children, each child must be signed in and out daily. Attendance records will be used throughout the day, during activities outside the building (ex. field trips) and/or in the event of an emergency or to ensure each child in attendance is accounted for.
- Administrative Override: In the event that a child is not signed in or out by a parent, the
- Attendance Release Form must be completed by the parent as soon as possible. Only upon receipt of the completed and signed Attendance Release Form can the system

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

- Administrator may create an override and enter the correct information in the Tadpoles Program. Completed forms will be kept on file for billing purposes, future reference and made available to authorized service agencies.
- Attendance records are kept on file electronically and can be made available to authorized service agencies and will be used for billing purposes.
- If your child is unable to attend ECCS on their scheduled day, please have the courtesy to call the school by 8AM that day. After 3 “no call, no shows” you will be subject to the daily drop in rate, and the Board will review your eligibility for enrollment.
- Please keep in mind that in addition to your commitment sheet being your commitment to ECCS regarding paying your bill on time, it is also our commitment to you and your child to provide the services as explained in this handbook and to hold your child's space.
- Remember, when you sign your commitment, you are committing to that entire session (school year or summer). Changes of commitments will only be allowed with approval from the Board of Directors.
- **Payment will be due by the 1st of each month and will be considered late after the 8th.**
- If payment is not received by the closing of business on the 8th of the month there will be a \$25.00 late fee added to your bill. This assessment will be added for each month the bill is not paid.
- If payment is not received by the closing of business on the 15th of the month, your child will not be permitted to attend ECCS until full payment is made.
- If payment is not received by the closing of business on the last day of the month, a letter will be sent notifying you that your bill will be turned over to Small Claims Court if payment is not made within 10 days.
- You will have the option of receiving a paper statement in the mail or a paperless statement via email. Please indicate your choice on the Parent Contract sheet found at the front of this Handbook.
- You will sign up for a payment commitment. You will have the option to pay by cash, check, direct withdrawal or credit card. If you choose a credit card, you will be required to pay a 3% credit card fee. This will be added to your bill.

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

- Rebates/refunds or the opportunity to switch days will not be provided for children who miss days due to illness, vacation, etc. Extenuating circumstances can be brought to the attention of the board.
- Scholarships are occasionally available for short term assistance. Please ask our teachers or a board member for information. Information for The Best Beginnings Scholarship provided through the state of Montana can be found at the Department of Health and Human Services, www.dphhs.mt The staff can provide you with an application form.
- The Board of Directors encourages parents who may have difficulty paying a monthly bill on time to contact one of us. If a conversation is started **before the due date** we will do what we can to work with you to set up payments. If a payment is not made we have no choice but to follow the timeline described above.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is an important component of this program based on the belief that the best environment for children exists when there is close family-child care facility relationship.

Parents and guardians of current students are the most influential factor affecting the success of ECCS. Because parents and guardians have the greatest personal knowledge of ECCS's operation, their support is necessary to convey the important role of ECCS in the community and region. Efforts that parents and guardians make to improve the facility directly benefit the experience of the students enrolled. ECCS cannot continue to exist without its fundraisers and help from our parent members.

Here are just a few ideas of how you can help ECCS:

- We welcome parents to help us out by providing items needed to run our center on a daily basis. These items may include: arts & crafts materials used for projects and activities at ECCS, laundry soap, dishwashing detergent, disinfecting wipes, etc.
- Any contribution for repairs, weekly chores, or projects that you, as an involved parent can do, helps keep the cost of your child's care at its minimum. Please check with staff members to learn what assistance may be needed most.
- Activities are planned where family members may come to ECCS for special events. We also ask parents to become involved in our field trips and events, which are vital to the continued success of our program. Do plan to visit ECCS! We would love to have you! Parents are welcome to come and volunteer their time and spend time with his or her child during the day.

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

- Since we are a non-profit organization, ECCS relies on income from fundraisers throughout the year to cover the costs of special projects (building maintenance, playground equipment, curriculum, etc.). **Parents are required to participate in at least one (1) of the fundraisers/projects per session.** Parents will have the opportunity to sign-up to volunteer throughout the year via notice.” If you do not participate, you will be graciously donating \$75 to ECCS.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is a whole system of teaching. Effective discipline is occurring all the time, not just when children misbehave. It is never used to humiliate or shame a child. At ECCS any disciplinary action taken is to redirect the children towards positive behavior. Our goal is to empower children to “own their behavior” and learn to make good choices through setting clear expectations, informing children of consequences, following through, consistency and redirection.

Children are encouraged to use their words and talk through conflicts when they arise, with the teachers there as mediators rather than problem solvers. We do provide them with the tools needed to achieve this with their peers as well as teachers and adults. This includes learning to identify feelings and recognizing when we feel them, learning appropriate expression of these feelings, a safe place to calm down and the stages of working out a problem (everyone gets a turn to listen and to talk, respectfully).

Just as the parents have expectations of us, as a center, we have expectations of every child who attends. Our expectations are as follows: respect for self, peers, adults and our environment, the ability to participate in daily activities such as circle, snack, centers, rest time etc. in a non-disruptive manner and the ability to change a behavior with some redirection.

We realize each day is different for every child. Redirection of behavior is expected when working with children but when redirecting is becoming constant, or more than usual, we will contact you, as the parent, for insight. This may be a phone call or a quick conversation at pick up or drop off. We respect the confidentiality of each child/family and strive to keep it. Therefore, we will choose a method with this in mind.

DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCES

Aggressive Behavior: We are constantly helping children identify their feelings at ECCS and while all feelings are normal, how they handle their emotions is the real tool we're trying to teach. There are some behaviors we know will have to be redirected, such as: hitting, pushing, grabbing, kicking, and throwing items or destructive behavior to the environment, themselves or others. Aggression can be a natural reaction to some situations but is always redirected. We

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

want children to know "it's okay to be mad but our hands are for helping" (our feet are for running, etc.).

These behaviors will be redirected as needed. When an aggressive behavior continues despite the help of the staff, you, as the parent, will be contacted. If we continue to see aggressive behavior throughout the day you will be asked to pick up your child for the rest of the day. If you have been called three (3) times in one month, a meeting with the Board of Directors will be set up to determine the future of your child's attendance at ECCS. Please keep in mind that the safety of the children is our main concern and we want ECCS to be a pleasant, safe place for everyone.

The following behaviors are not tolerated at ECCS: choking, biting, cutting, spitting on other children/adults, closed-fist punching and any other behavior deemed aggressive by an ECCS employee. In the event any of these acts occur you will be called to pick up your child immediately and a meeting with the Board of Directors will be scheduled before your child may return.

DEVELOPMENTAL READINESS

We believe home and childcare together form a positive support system for the growing child. Parents are always kept informed of their child's progress. Sometimes a child experiences difficulty adjusting to the ECCS environment for a variety of reasons. She/he may not yet be ready for a somewhat structured experience or may be experiencing problems the teaching staff is not qualified to diagnose or handle. In such a case, the director may hold a conference or simple discussion with parents to determine a course of action which is in the best interest of the child. This may involve the following: a nurse, social worker, director, teachers, psychologist, occupational therapist, and speech-language pathologist. No action will be taken without parent consultation, but recommendations may be made which consider the child and his/her parents as well as our program.

If at any time parents have a concern about their child's progress or ability to progress, remember all of the professionals listed above are available to us, free of charge, through the public school system for consultation and evaluations.

RECORDS

You must fill out several forms before your child's first day at ECCS. These include a preschool service contract, immunization records and emergency information record. Additional forms may have to be filled out as required by state or agencies every year to insure our licensing requirements.

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARDS

ECCS must have a complete emergency information card on file for all children.

This gives permission for emergency treatment for each child, contact information for any other persons authorized to pick up your children, and any person responsible for your child if you are out of town during ECCS session. Parents are responsible for keeping their child's emergency information card current.

PICK-UP POLICY - CHILD SAFETY

Our concern for the safety of your children is our highest priority. The following guidelines will be followed regarding the release of children to adults.

1. No child will be released to a person other than a parent or guardian without the verbal or written permission of the parent or guardian as indicated on the Emergency Card and Pick-up Authorization form. If a parent/guardian desires his or her child be released to another person not indicated on the Emergency card the following information must be received in writing, or a phone call may be accepted if the teacher is certain to whom they are speaking.
 - name of person the child is to be released to
 - time when the child is to be released and returned
 - purpose of the release
2. Exceptions may be made in case of an emergency. The determination of an emergency is made by the teacher in charge.
3. No child less than First Grade will be permitted to walk home or to another destination unless the parent or guardian gives their permission for them to walk with an older sibling to a specific destination.
4. With regards to divorced or separated parents:
 - A parent without custody may have access to his/her child or have them released to him/her with written permission of the parent with custody.
 - Where applicable, parents with custody should inform the school of custody arrangements and, if necessary, provide a court order (restraining order) which will be kept on file. Without this court order ECCS cannot legally prevent non-custodial parents from taking the child from the school.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

ECCS is governed by the State of Montana and has adopted the Ennis Public School Child Abuse Policy. This policy establishes the appropriate method and forms to be completed when reporting to the proper authorities suspected child abuse and/or neglect. This policy has also been developed to conform to the provisions of Montana Law relating to child abuse and or neglect. Under section 41-3-201 of Montana Law it is required of any person who suspects a

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

child is being or has been abused to report this suspicion to the proper authorities.

ILLNESS

To insure a POSITIVE, HEALTHY experience for all children, ECCS will initiate the following procedures regarding illness:

- Parents will be asked to take home any child who arrives at school with signs/symptoms of being ill or becomes ill while at school.
- The staff has the authority to exclude children from school for illness or other health related reasons.
- If your child cannot play outside because he or she has a cold, please keep them home until they are well. We cannot leave a child inside alone while the other children enjoy their outside play.
- "Parents, or other authorized contact, will be notified immediately if their child experiences one of the following:
 - vomiting
 - fever
 - is suspected of ingesting poison or other toxic substance
 - other symptoms of illness that prevent the child from participating in ECCS activities
- In the case of possible ingestion of poison or toxic substance, in addition to calling the parent or authorized contact, we will immediately contact the poison control center."

MEDICATION AND INJURY

Parents need to discuss giving prescriptions and over the counter medicines with the teacher(s). A *Medication Authorization Form* must be completed by the parent indicating the name of medication, how the medication is to be administered, the amount to be administered and the times when medication is to be administered. Prescription medications must be brought to ECCS in the prescribed bottle.

If an accident or injury occurs, first-aid will be administered, the parent shall be called immediately, and a report form completed in the ECCS Accident Report Record. If emergency treatment is necessary, the parent will be called immediately and the child will be

taken to the hospital accompanied by school personnel. The following first aid procedures will be applied:

- Nosebleed: Pinch bottom of nose shut. Lean forward on a chair. Clean child's hands and face.
- Choking: Encourage child to keep coughing. May have to perform the Heimlich

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

maneuver.

- Bee sting: Ice or make a paste of baking soda and water.
- Fever: Take temperature and call parents.
- Throwing up: Call parents. Give water and lie down to wait for parents.
- Hits head: Ice the "egg", keep the child calm and monitor.
- Cuts and scrapes: Clean area. Apply Neosporin and Band-Aid.
- Falls and cuts inside mouth: Rinse with water, ice and keep calm.

PANDEMIC PLAN

In the event of a pandemic in our area, you will be provided with a school policy specific to the pandemic.

POTTY ACCIDENTS

It is a requirement that your child is potty trained by their start date at ECCS. All potty accidents will be treated with the utmost respect for the child. You are required to have a clean set of clothes, labeled with your child's name, in their cubby. If a child wets themselves or has a bowel movement a teacher will contact a parent to let them know. Upon an accident occurring, we will help your child into fresh clothes, but the soiled clothing will be put into a plastic bag for cleaning at home. Please remember to return an extra set of clean clothes the next day. If your child is having frequent accidents at home due to an illness or other circumstances please notify the school. If a child has three (3) accidents (wet or bowel movement) within a short period of time the parents will be asked to meet with the director and/or teacher. It is the decision of the staff and director to determine whether the child is actually potty trained. The director has the authority to exclude children from school whom they believe are not potty trained.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

Children need to bring a healthy lunch and drink each day. Try to remember they are not adults and while they eat well it is easier to finish an amount equal to their size than to have an insurmountable mound of food. Each child is expected to eat the healthy portion of the meal sent before going onto the treats. If your child does not eat his/her meal, the staff will repack the lunch into the original containers to be sent home with the child. There is a microwave at

the school for heating portions of children's lunches that are packed in microwave safe containers. A lunch box including a small thermos (or juice box) and room for sandwiches and fruit is the best container for children's lunches. These are easy for children to manipulate themselves.

ECCS participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to provide healthy

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

snacks twice daily. Menus are posted at ECCS for the current and upcoming week. Each family will be asked to complete an Income Eligibility Form with registration packet to determine the highest level of reimbursement for our facility. If your child does not want the snack offered they do not have to eat it, however, no other option will be offered. We encourage children to try a "no thank you helping" of each snack item in order to expose them to different nutritious foods. If your child has special dietary needs (i.e. allergy or food intolerance), please communicate with ECCS staff who will ask you to complete the *Medical Statement to Request Special Meals and/or Accommodations* form. This information will help determine appropriate substitutions for your child and will be kept confidential. Snacks are not intended to take the place of a child's breakfast or lunch. Be sure your child eats a good meal before coming to ECCS. Parents are encouraged to bring healthy snacks whenever they want. Healthy snacks include fruits, vegetables, cheese, bread, crackers, juices, etc. Please consult our staff for further suggestions. Birthdays are celebrated at ECCS so special snacks for your child's birthday are welcome.

TOYS

Books to share are always welcomed. Toys brought from home can easily get misplaced or even broken, we prefer your child enjoy them at home. Show and Tell days are scheduled throughout the month for children to bring in their item of choice and toys can be brought only on those days.

FIELD TRIPS

The children are sometimes taken on field trips to places of interest in the area. The Parent Contract sheet asks that you indicate permission for any walking field trip. Whenever a trip entails transportation by motor vehicle, parental permission forms must be signed before a child may participate. The form will be given out with as much advance notice as possible. There may be an additional fee required for some field trips.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410 or call (800)

795-3272 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**The board of directors and staff reserve the right to adapt existing and implement new policies as deemed necessary. A minimum of one-month notice will be provided for any policy

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook

change.

This document was revised August 2020 and replaces all other versions to date.

PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

I, _____
acknowledge that I have received and will abide by the ECCS Parent

Ennis Community Children's School Parent Handbook
Handbook dated August 2020.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

*Please sign, date, and return to ECCS