SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS CHRISTIAN EARLY LEARNING CENTER

ELC & BASE Camp Parent Handbook

2026-2027 School Year

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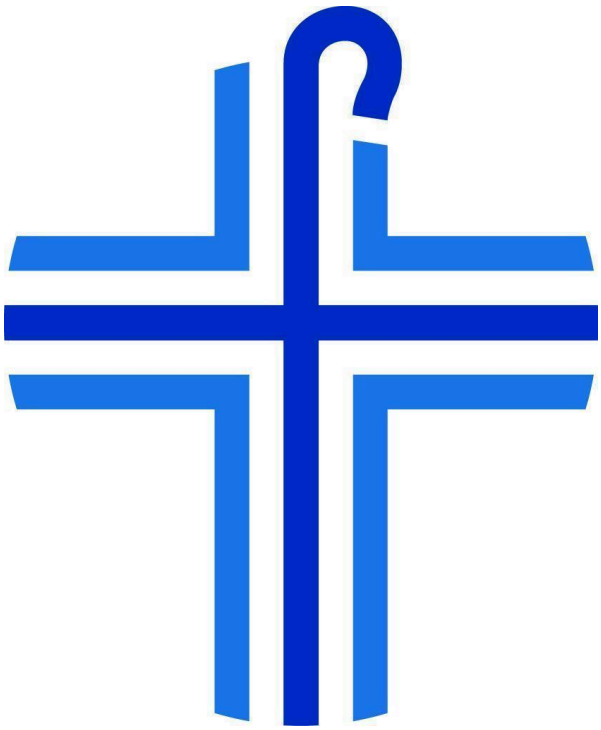

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Welcome to Shepherd of the Hills ELC

Welcome! We appreciate the opportunity to work alongside you and your family in your child's early care and education. This handbook has been prepared in order to familiarize you with the policies and procedures of our program. We hope that through an understanding of our policies, we can work together to help your child's preschool experience be the best it can be.

Mission Statement

Our mission is simple: Lead children to

Love **J**esus
Love **O**thers
Love **Y**our Learning

How...

Love Jesus...	Growth in knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ.
Love Others...	Encourage children, families, and staff to use their talents and resources to serve others and spread God's love to the community.
Love Your Learning...	Provide the highest in quality early learning experience with opportunity for play and socialization in a safe, clean, loving, and child-centered environment.

Purpose

We serve as an extension of the Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church ministry. Our unified purpose is to spread the Lord's Gospel while nurturing each child's growth. We endeavor to discover each child's gifts in order to help all children reach their full potential and succeed spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, and academically.

Philosophy

To enable children to "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." II Peter 3:18

At Shepherd of the Hills Early Learning Center, it is believed that:

- Early childhood education is a ministry to the families of young children by providing parents with a program designed for support, encouragement, and

opportunities that enhance the educational and developmental processes already present in the home.

- The young child is a gift from God (Psalm 127:3) and learns best about God's world through experimentation and exploration. Therefore, the early learning program plans developmentally appropriate activities and values play as an avenue for learning.
- Early childhood education provides a warm and loving Christ-centered environment where children can develop to their full potential creatively, spiritually, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.
- Early childhood education is a joint ministry that involves the church, the community, the staff, the family, and the child.

Parent Responsibilities

You are a vital part of our center, and your help is needed for our program's success. To help ensure our partnership, please:

1) Read this handbook and sign the acknowledgement and agreement page at the end of this document.

2) Take the time to read all newsletters, notes, and Playground messages.

3) Ask questions about items that need clarification.

4) Agree to make your financial commitment by paying monthly ELC tuition.

5) Ask your child about their day, and show interest in work done at school.

6) Give your support to our program with your prayers.

Curriculum

Our classroom teachers plan a complete curriculum each year to provide children the opportunity to develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically**.** All areas of curriculum include exploration, exposure, and experimentation. These studies are supported by our use of Creative Curriculum.

- **Spiritually**: The children will learn to sing songs that praise God, start to recognize the meaning of prayer, pray before meals, participate in Jesus Time, and attend chapel. Through these activities, children will learn that Jesus is our Savior, loves and takes care of us, and is always with us.

- **Socially**: Children are encouraged and given time to develop friendships as they work and play together with their peers.
- **Emotionally**: ELC staff will help each child develop confidence through positive reinforcement and activities geared for challenge and success.
- **Intellectually**: Children will be introduced to colors, shapes, numbers, letters, phonics, printing, etc., through varied developmentally appropriate activities.
- **Physically**: Each child will have the opportunity to develop balance and coordination through outdoor activities and the use of a wide variety of playground equipment as well as indoors with physical education equipment in our gymnasium. Small muscles will be strengthened through art experiences, puzzles, and small manipulative toys.

Enrollment

Preschool enrollment is open to children who have reached the age of 18 months through age 6.

Summer Camp Enrollment is open to children who have reached the age of 18 months through age 12.

Registration begins in January for the next school year and continues until all classes are at maximum enrollment. **A completed enrollment packet is due at the time of registration along with a non-refundable registration fee of $200**. All required registration paperwork must be on file prior to the child's first day of school. You may be asked to keep your child home until this paperwork is received.

Termination of Attendance

If it is necessary to withdraw a child, you must inform the Director and Assistant Director in writing 30 days before withdrawal. If a written 30-day notification is not received, you will be responsible for the full cost of one month of tuition upon your withdrawal. Tuition must be paid in full upon your departure.

Tuition

The Early Learning Center (ELC) is a ministry of Shepherd of the Hills, serving children and families with care, consistency, and excellence. Tuition payments

enable us to provide quality staffing, maintain safe facilities, and ensure a stable environment for every child.

Tuition is based on the schedule you choose for your child. Tuition is paid online through Playground in 10 equal monthly installments from August through May. There is a 2% discount for tuition that is paid in full in August.

Credit card charges will be subject to a 2% transaction fee per transaction.

Families may choose one of two monthly tuition due dates: the 5th or the 15th. Tuition charges will be posted to your child's Playground account on the 1st (for payments due on the 5th) or the 11th (for payments due on the 15th). Autopay will run on the 15th of each month, however, payments may be made manually at any time between the posting date and the selected due date.

- Tuition for payment dates on the 5th will be considered late on the 6th of each month and delinquent on the 10th.
- Tuition for payment dates on the 15th will be considered late on the 16th of each month and delinquent on the 20th.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring payment is received by the selected due date each month. Failure to make timely payments may result in late fees and, if an account remains unpaid for 30 days, your child's enrollment may be paused or terminated until the account has been brought current, as outlined in this handbook.

Class Size and Ages

Our classrooms allow ample room for children. The following are our staff to child ratios:

Child	Ages	Maximum Capacity	Ratio
Toddlers *	18 mo. – 36 mo.	10	1:5
2 ½ & Young 3's*	2 ½ - 3 ½ yrs	16	1:8
Preschool *	3 – 4 yrs	20	1:10
PreKindergarten *	4 – 5 yrs	24	1:12

Jr. Kindergarten*	4 – 6 yrs	24	1:12**

*The minimum age for each class must be attained on or before October 1st of the current year. For the 2 ½ & Young 3's class, your child must have reached 2 ½ by the first day of school.
**If Jr. Kindergarten consists solely of children older than 5 in a given academic year, the maximum ratio could increase to 1:15.

Hours of Operation

The school day for Shepherd of the Hills ELC begins at 8:30am and ends at 3:15pm, Monday through Friday. There are several class options available during these hours. Please refer to our class offerings and rate sheet for further information. We also provide a before and after school program called BASE Camp (**B**efore and **A**fter **S**chool **E**nrichment) along with school break camps. BASE Camp serves children 2.5 years through 6 years of age.

BASE Camp – School Year……7:30am - 8:15am & 3:15pm-5:30pm

Toddler/Preschool Program ……..8:30am -11:30am

Lunch Bunch……..11:30am – 1:00 pm

Afternoon Blast……..11:30am – 3:15pm

All students are asked to arrive by 8:30 am.

If your child is going to be late or unable to attend, please send a note in Playground to let your child's teacher know. If the absence is due to illness, please indicate your child's symptoms so that we might track illness trends.

Arrivals

8:30 am Policy

- We do curbside drop-off from the South Main Entrance.
- We have an 8:15 to 8:30 drop-off window, and our day begins at 8:30.
- All children will use the bathroom and wash their hands before entering the classroom.

- Each parent/authorized individual is responsible for signing your child in using the Playground app. Each parent/authorized individual should use your own personal code for sign in and out to indicate which parent/authorized individual dropped off or picked up. State Law requires each child to be signed in and out each day with a full signature of 18 years of age or older.
- To allow for the flow of traffic, please remain in your vehicle until you reach the designated drop-off point. A teacher will greet your child at your vehicle and take them out of the car to go inside. If you do need to get out of your vehicle, please park in a parking space, and not in the car loop line.
- If you need to drop off your child before 8:15 am, please let us know 24 hours in advance, and then you will drop off at the BASE Camp entrance on the North side of our campus. You will find a QR code to sign in either on the BASE Camp door, or just inside it on arrival. Ring the doorbell, and a staff member will let your child in. Please note that staff will begin to meet up at the South Entrance at 8:10 am, so if you will utilize morning BASE Camp, please ensure you drop off before 8:10 am.
- If an emergency arises and you are going to be late, please send a Playground message before 8:30 a.m. Teachers will then be prepared to smoothly transition your child into the daily activities already in progress or plan accordingly. If you will be dropping off or picking up outside of our typical drop-off and pickup hours, please go to the BASE Camp entrance. Please understand that all of our teachers will be in their classes and may not be immediately available and you may experience wait times. A staff member will get to you as soon as they can.

Departures

- It is essential that you pick up your child on time!
    - Morning pickup is at 11:30 am - South Main Entrance
    - Lunch Bunch pickup is at 1:00 pm - South Main Entrance
    - Afternoon Blast pickup is at 3:15 pm - South Main Entrance
- If you plan to pick up your child early, please inform your classroom teacher in advance so that we can have your child ready with as little disruption as possible to the other children.

- If we have not received notification of a late pickup and your child has not been picked up within 15 minutes of the end of their scheduled pickup time, we will begin calling the people listed on your Emergency Contact List. If, after a one-hour wait time, we are unable to reach a parent or anyone on your Contact List, the Arapahoe Sheriff will be notified.
- For your child's protection, he/she will be released only to the adult(s) you have designated in Playground. Each assigned adult should have their own sign-on credentials and have the app installed. This information will be filed in the child's records. In an emergency, the child may also be released to an adult (18 years of age or older) for whom the child's parent or guardian has given verbal authorization. If the staff member who releases the child does not know the adult, photo identification will be required to ensure that the adult is the designated contact. Once the child has been released, he/she is then under the authorized adult's supervision.
- Children will only be released to adults on their pick-up list. In the event of a custody dispute, court-ordered documents are required to exclude a parent from pickup.

Late Pick-Up Fees

- In the event you will be late to pick up your child, please notify us as soon as possible via Playground. For our 11:30 and 1:00 pickup times, we will begin charging late fees after 5 minutes. Each minute you are late is a $2 charge from the start of pickup time. For our 3:15 pickup, we will check your child into BASE Camp at 3:31 p.m., and you will be charged for a full hour of BASE Camp. All fees will be added to your Playground account.

Drop-Ins and Schedule Changes

A drop-in is when a family registers for a full or part-day on which their child is not normally scheduled. Schedule changes involve adjusting a child's regular days or times of attendance on an ongoing basis. For any drop-ins or schedule changes, parents must complete a Schedule Change Request Form, available in the Parent Info section of our website (https://www.shepherdhillselc.org/parent-info/). Please note that submitting

this form does not guarantee approval, as requests are dependent on classroom availability. All requests must be submitted at least 36 hours in advance of the requested date. Requests will not be reviewed over the weekend. If you are requesting a Monday drop-in, the form must be submitted no later than the Friday morning prior, to allow adequate time for review and response.

What your child should bring to School

All children need to bring the following items clearly labeled with the child's name:

- water bottle
- at least one complete season-appropriate change of clothes, including socks to be left at school
- a packed lunch if staying for Lunch Bunch
- a packed lunch and bedding which consists of a fitted sheet and small blanket, if the child stays for Afternoon Blast

Children who are potty training will need to bring 2 complete changes of clothes (including socks & shoes), a good supply of diapers/pull-ups, and wipes in addition to the above.

Illness Policy

Please notify Shepherd of the Hills if your child will be absent. If your child or any immediate family member has contracted a contagious disease, immediately notify the classroom teacher and ELC Director. When your child is ill, please let your teacher know in detail what their symptoms are, as we report all symptoms to Arapahoe County for the safety of the school. We will then post Health Alerts in the classrooms to make parents aware of possible exposure.

We follow the "How Sick is Too Sick" Policy as defined by the CDPHE (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment). This policy is available on the Parent Info tab on our website. Please keep your child home if they are ill. Germs travel very quickly in a preschool setting. By keeping your child at home when they are ill, he/she is not spreading illness or disease to others or being exposed to other germs while his/her resistance is low. Keep in mind that when your child returns to school, he/she will need to be ready to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities.

Shepherd of the Hills ELC reserves the right to send sick children home. Teachers will observe all children entering their classrooms in the morning and watch for signs of illness. For the benefit of all our children and staff, we will call the parent of any child who has symptoms of illness such as fever, or a child who is not able to participate in activities as they normally would. In such cases, the child is immediately isolated from the others, and a parent is contacted. If you are contacted to pick up your sick child, please be prepared to pick him/her up within an hour. You must keep him/her at home for at least 24 hours after being picked up or after symptoms have subsided.

Accidents/ Injuries

Scrapes, cuts, etc., are washed with warm water and soap. If necessary, a band-aid is placed over the scrape. If your child falls and gets a bump, ice will be applied. For every minor injury, we will fill out an incident report and add an incident activity to your child's daily record on Playground. This will tell you when and how the injury took place. A parent's signature is required after reading the report, and then it will be filed with your child's information. In the event of a more severe injury, the parents will be notified immediately. If the parents cannot be reached and it is determined that immediate attention is needed, 911 will be called to request professional assistance. If it is determined that the child must be transferred to the hospital, a staff member must accompany the child in the absence of a parent. The child's Emergency Care Sheet will be pulled and taken with the child.

Attendance, Absences, Holidays, Closures

Attendance: So that all students are able to take full advantage of the spiritual, educational, and physical growth opportunities at Shepherd of the Hills, regular attendance at school is expected.

Absences: Because enrollment determines the number of staff needed and the amount of supplies required, there will be no monetary allowances made for absences, nor may the day be made up at another time during the week. Your paid tuition reserves your child's space in the program.

Holidays: Holidays are taken into consideration at the time annual tuition fees are established and no allowances will be made. If the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the center will be closed on the declared holiday. Shepherd of the Hills ELC will close in observance of the

following holidays: *Labor Day, Fall Break the week of Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day (which occur during our winter break), Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, and Independence Day.*

Closures: All scheduled closures will be listed in the yearly school calendar which is available on the Parent Info tab on our ELC website. Unplanned closures will be announced via Playground. Snow days will follow Littleton Public Schools.

Parent and School Communication

Parent Information is communicated via Playground, our student information and billing platform. Please check Playground regularly to stay informed. If you have questions and need to contact a school administrator, please message the Director and the Assistant Director, or email us at earlylearning@sothfamily.org.

Newsletters

Each teacher will provide a classroom-specific newsletter or calendar. Items that apply to multiple classrooms will be covered by announcements from the ELC Director or ELC Assistant Director to inform you of upcoming activities and school news.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Shepherd of the Hills does not discriminate against any child or family because of race, color, sexual orientation, nationality, or ethnic origin.

Translators

Families may bring their own translator to any and all events and meetings.

Student Evaluation

Your child's progress will be assessed throughout the year. A written progress report will be made available at Parent/Teacher Conferences twice per year.

Parent/Teacher Conferences (Student Evaluation)

Parent/Teacher Conferences (Student Evaluations) will be offered twice during the school year. Conferences encourage effective parent/teacher communication. The first conference, held in the fall, will be focused on goal setting for the child. The second conference, held in the spring, will focus on the child's progress and recommendations for the next year. Results of assessments will be shared during both fall and spring conferences.

Resources and Referrals

Our teachers and caregivers use authentic observation to continually provide individualized care for the children in their care. This in-depth process provides information on the social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development of each child. If we ever become concerned that a developmental delay or disability could be present, a meeting will be scheduled with the family to determine if a referral to a specialist should be made. Referrals to the child's primary care provider, school nurse, Developmental Pathways, All Health, and Child Find are all provided by our program.

Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

Quality care is of the utmost importance to all the staff at Shepherd of the Hills ELC. To support our continued growth we use multiple ways, including annual self-assessments and parent surveys, to determine improvements that could be made. These goals are reviewed and revised at least once a year and are shared with our families, staff, and ELC board via our quality improvement plan; a copy of this plan is accessible in the parent resource center.

Parent Concerns

We encourage you to communicate regularly with your child's teacher. The Director invites your opinions, suggestions, and concerns regarding the ELC ministry of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church.

When parents have concerns pertaining to their children and/or their teacher, they should discuss the matter with the classroom teacher first. A phone call, email, or a personal consultation with the teacher will often alleviate many problems that may arise out of misunderstanding. Please email the teacher or send a note requesting the teacher contact the parent to arrange a conference. Please respect the school hours as the time when the teacher's primary

responsibilities are classroom teaching and supervision. If the matter is not resolved, then please set up a time to speak with the Director.

Life-Altering Events: Please let your child's teacher know if there is a life-altering event. Major events such as moving, a new baby, the death of a family member or pet, etc., in a child's life can help the teacher understand the child's emotional and social well-being.

Special Occasions

Birthdays: Birthdays are celebrated during the morning snack time. You may choose to bring a special treat. Please notify the teacher at least one week in advance so they can plan this time. Candles or open flames are not permitted. **FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN AND PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH ALLERGIES, WE ASK THAT ALL TREATS BE STORE-BOUGHT WITH THE ORIGINAL PACKAGING AND SEAL INTACT**. Check with your child's teacher for any known allergies.

Parties: Parents may contribute food or treats (store-bought with the original packaging and seal intact, except for fresh fruit and vegetables) to their child's class parties. We ask that all fruit and vegetables be washed and sliced before bringing them to school.

In-School Field Trips: Occasionally, in-school field trips (i.e. guest speakers) are planned each year to help enhance your child's learning throughout the school year. Some of these special activities may require an additional fee, which will be announced in advance, and money collected by the due date. Classroom teachers will supervise all children in their classrooms during all special events.

Field Trips: Teachers may plan school-year field trips for children 4 and older. Field trip permission forms will be sent home in advance. If there is a cost, it will be stated on the form. Transportation will also be stated on the form. No child will be permitted to go on field trips without a signed permission form. A list of all children and staff participating in the field trip will be left at the school with the approximate time of departure and return. If a child arrives after the group has left the center, he will be in the care of the staff that remained at the center. All parents who wish to chaperone must complete an online "Protecting our Children" class. Parents will be asked to provide and install car seats. Parents may volunteer to walk with the children and staff but must adhere to all

school policies while on the field trip with the children. Smoking/Vaping/Alcohol drinking will not be permitted at any time during a field trip.

Cooperation and Behavior Policy

At Shepherd of the Hills ELC, we have the opportunity to learn to know the Lord Jesus and live lives that please Him. Students and teachers alike should frequently encourage each other to this end. To love God and to love our neighbor is God's will for our behavior, and it serves as a very practical guideline for our thoughts, words, and actions.

Shepherd of the Hills Early Learning Center uses Love and Logic principles to foster responsible student conduct at school and in our related ministries. As such, teachers provide direct instruction to introduce the student to classroom rules and expectations, giving special attention to treating students as unique individuals, as special children of God.

Redirection is used whenever possible. A short separation may be used for persistent behavior problems.

Unacceptable behaviors include but are not limited to hurting another child or staff member (hitting, kicking, biting), intentionally hurting others' feelings (name calling, language, bullying), and hurting him/herself. As well as, destructive actions (throwing, cutting, drawing on inappropriate objects or inappropriate pictures, or breaking items) or disregard for classroom and/or playground rules.

In the event a child is struggling with challenging behaviors that are outside the norm, a conference with the parents, teacher, and director will be called to discuss and partner to put a positive behavior plan into place.

Snacks

A nutritious morning snack is served daily as part of the tuition charge. Each snack is comprised of two components (dairy/fruit, grain/dairy, fruit/grain, etc.) The children drink out of child-sized cups with no lids. If your child attends after-school care we will provide an additional snack.

The snacks are prepared on the premises. All snacks served meet the requirements of the Colorado Department of Health and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Weekly menus are posted on the Parent Information Board in each classroom as well as sent out at the beginning of the week in Playground.

Food and Beverage Allergies

Please indicate on the Child Emergency Information and on your child's Health Status Form if your child has a known food or beverage allergy. If your child's allergy requires medication, you will also need an Individualized Health Care Plan to be signed by your child's physician and returned to Shepherd of Hills.

Due to the growing number of children with food allergies in our classrooms, our policies include:

- Nut aware environment
    - Depending on the severity of allergies reported, we will either have special peanut-free areas for children with allergies to eat or we will limit peanut products in our school.
- All outside treats must be store-bought with the original packaging and seal intact.
    - We cannot ensure the safety of homemade treats due to possible cross-contamination of allergens.

If your child has multiple or significant food and/or drink allergies, we request that you check the daily menu and provide your child's food when appropriate. The staff at Shepherd of the Hills ELC will not substitute any food or drink for a child if a parent fails to supply alternative food.

An allergy list will be available in every classroom to alert the staff to any food allergies.

The goal of this policy is to reduce the chance that a child with allergies will have contact with life-threatening foods. In addition, we will work with families on an individual basis to manage each child's situation. Please note that while we do our best to ensure the safety of all children with allergies, other groups use our facility throughout the week, and we cannot strictly enforce these policies outside of school hours.

Packed Lunches

When packing a lunch for your child, please send a well-balanced and nutritious meal packed in reusable plastic containers instead of Ziploc baggies. Partitioned lunch containers are preferred. We recommend lunches come in an insulated lunch box or bag with an ice pack. Lunches will not be refrigerated or warmed. Children need a variety of healthy foods to learn and grow, so we ask that junk (sugary) food be kept to a minimum. In order to meet current state licensing requirements, please help us by sending a protein, grain, fruit, and vegetable in your child's lunch each day. If a component is missing, we are required to supplement the lunch with the missing component. We would like to keep costs down, but if this becomes a frequent occurrence, a charge of $3.00 for each day we need to supplement the lunch will be added to your account. All candy found in lunch boxes will be returned home with your child. Please send foods that can be opened easily or do not require special preparation.

Medication

The staff will administer medication such as Epi-pens, inhalers, etc., for children who have life-threatening illnesses. Doctor-prescribed medication must be in its original, unopened container with the pharmacy name and the name of the child enrolled in our school.

Medical permission forms are available in the office and online. Before any prescriptions are accepted or administered, all forms must be filled out and signed by the Physician and a parent. Please give the medication and the completed form directly to the teacher in charge or the ELC Director. Never leave medication on the counter, in a cubby, or in a backpack.

We ask you to put the medication and the physician-signed Medical permission form in a zip-lock bag with your child's name on it. All storage and administration of children's medication are in compliance with section 12-38-132, C.R.S., of the "Nurse Practice Act".

MEDICATION NOT COVERED BY A HEALTH CARE PLAN CAN NOT BE ADMINISTERED AT SCHOOL.

Immunizations and Pre-Admission Health Evaluations

State Law requires proof of each child's immunizations. All children must be current on immunizations or submit a paper copy of an exemption form to

enroll at Shepherd of the Hills ELC. The physician needs to sign the child's current immunizations within 30 days of their start date. Please visit www.coloradoimmunizations.com for more information.

Included in the application packet is a copy of the General Health Appraisal Form or physical examination. Part A needs to be filled out by the parent, and Part B must be filled out and signed by your child's physician.

All children who are in the Early Learning Center must have a current health statement indicating that he/she has been seen by their physician within the last 12 months. (6 months if your child is under the age of 2 1/2).

Emergency Procedures

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that we have the most current information on the child's emergency contact sheet.

In case of emergencies or serious illness, Shepherd of the Hills ELC will then do the following:

1. Attempt to contact the parent or guardian.
2. Next, we would notify those people listed as emergency contacts.
3. If necessary, we will call an ambulance.
4. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and stay until a parent or guardian arrives.

In the event of the following emergencies, Shepherd of the Hills ELC will take the appropriate measures to keep all children as safe as possible:

Sheltering/Lock Down: If the building is safe, we will protect your child by doing one or more of the following, depending on the nature and seriousness of the event:

- Secure the perimeter by locking all outside windows and doors
- Proceeding to the safest location in the building

  a. The school will not open doors for anyone except public safety officials during a lockdown or sheltering.

  b. The school will do its best to communicate with parents depending on the situation. The school will make decisions based on what public safety officials say.

  c. Do not call the school. Doing so will hinder necessary communications between the school and public safety officials.

d. Do not expect that the school will call you immediately if an emergency strikes.

- **Our first priority is protecting students and staff. Calls will be made as soon as is practical and safe.**

Evacuation: If the building is not safe, your child will be evacuated to a safe location. The evacuation may be for a short period outside onto the playground. If possible, we will evacuate to Arapahoe High School, although it may not be possible to use this location. The determination of an evacuation site may be altered to suit the particular situation.

Missing or Lost Child: If a child were missing from our Early Learning Center, the staff would follow the steps outlined below:

- One assigned staff member would check all classrooms, bathrooms, hallways, and offices, then proceed downstairs to check the entire lower facility, including the stairwells.
- A second staff member would check the playground.
- This same staff member would then check the north outside area.
- A third staff member would check the south outside area.
- Once a child is deemed lost, the Director or Assistant Director would pull the child's permanent file for phone numbers and the address of the child. The Director or Assistant Director will first contact the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Department, second the Parents of the child, and third the Department of Human Services Child Care Division. If requested by the above parties, a recent photo will be made available.

Fire Drills, Tornado Drills, and Lockdown Drills

Emergency evacuation maps are posted in each room.

Fire Drills: The children practice monthly fire drills with evacuation.

Tornado Drills: The children practice tornado drills with evacuation to a safe, secure location monthly March through October. The ELC staff will direct the children to the lower level inside the classrooms or the basement when possible. Our tornado drill is sounded over our radios using a simulated tornado siren.

Lockdown Drills: The children practice lockdown drills in a safe, secure location within our building. The ELC staff will direct the children to a

secure location or will shelter in place in their classrooms. The teachers and children will stay in place until the lockdown is lifted.

Preschool Cancellation Policy

Please check the Playground message board for updated information about school closures. All unplanned closures will be announced via a Playground announcement from the school.

Inclement Weather Policy

Daily Weather: The staff will monitor the weather on a daily basis. If it is too cold (based on temperature and wind chill) or snowy, we will not take the children outside to play. We require all children to bring a warm jacket, gloves, appropriate shoes, and a hat, as the weather can change and allow us to play outside.

We will monitor the heat index. If it is too hot or humid, we will not go outside. Again, we require all children to bring a water bottle with their name on it during these months.

When the temperature is not within licensing guidelines, the children will play inside.

Clothing

Since children will engage in vigorous play and a variety of art experiences, we suggest they be dressed in durable, washable clothing. Dress length should be mid-thigh with shorts or leggings underneath. All clothing should be clean, neat, and in good repair.

Climbing and running are part of a preschooler's day and sturdy, well-fitting shoes are needed. All shoes must be safe for running and climbing and be close-toed with a back strap. ***** **NO FLIP-FLOPS/OPEN-TOED SHOES** ******

All children must bring a complete change of clothes including socks, underwear, shirt and pants, and shoes, clearly marked with the child's name, in case of an occasional spill or accident, and kept at school. If your child is in the process of potty training, please bring an additional set of underwear and pants. Soiled clothing will be sent home to be laundered and a clean change of clothes will need to be returned at the next class session. Please update the

clothing with the season and growth of your child. We do keep some extra clothing on hand, but most children feel more comfortable wearing their own.

Since temperatures can change quickly, layered clothing is recommended. Children should bring a sweater or jacket on all but the warmest days. All removable clothing is to be clearly marked with the child's name or initials.

We go out in cold weather, so please make sure that your child has appropriate outerwear including hats, gloves, and boots. Please also bring indoor shoes on cold days as boots can get very warm and are not comfortable all day in the classroom. Boots are not permitted in the gym.

The school is not responsible for replacing damaged clothing.

Sunscreen

Please apply sunscreen to your child before coming to school. Please also provide a bottle/can of your chosen brand of sunscreen to leave at school. Please ensure that the sunscreen is not expired. Parents are required to fill out a Topical Preparations waiver before staff can apply any sunscreen, ointments, bug sprays, etc. When filling out this waiver, please use your CHILD'S name at the top for whom the waiver applies.

Rest Time

Children who stay for Afternoon Blast will rest each day after lunch. A rest period is required by state licensing for children who are in the building for more than 4 hours.

The center provides a cot for each child. Parents are asked to provide a blanket and a crib sheet (size needed for cot) labeled with the child's name. Blankets and sheets will be stored in the child's bedding bag. Bedding needs to be taken home every Friday (or on your child's last day of attendance each week) to be laundered. Children may bring a small stuffed animal or soft toy for rest time. For children under 3, any stuffed animals brought to school need to have embroidered eyes to avoid any choking hazards.

Video Viewing

Videos are used only in conjunction with topics that the children are studying or holiday-related. Videos shown to my child will be rated "G". The section related to television/video viewing on the Waiver and Indemnity Agreement form must

be initialed by the parent. This release/agreement will be kept on file. Video viewing/computer time is kept to a maximum of 30 minutes per week. Children under 2 years of age will not view videos on any type of device per state licensing regulations.

Toys, Personal Belongings, Etc.

Since it is disruptive to have toys from home, they will only be allowed at school on a child's classroom share or special day. Your child's teacher will post these days ahead of time. We ask that all chapstick and lotions, etc. be kept at home unless there is an absolute need in which case the items will be stored by the teacher and kept out of reach of other children. Shepherd of the Hills cannot be held responsible for the loss of these items. At no time are guns or weapons allowed at school, including toys.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is a developmental milestone that is most successful when there is consistency between home and school. While Shepherd of the Hills ELC is happy to support and encourage children throughout the toilet-training process, the primary responsibility for toilet training rests with the family. Shepherd of the Hills ELC will not begin support in toilet training until after 24 months of age. If your child is not fully toilet trained, please send 2 changes of clothes and a supply of diapers/pull-ups at all times.

We recommend that all children entering our 3-year-old Preschool Classroom be able to use the toilet independently. This includes communicating the need to use the bathroom facilities, being able to manipulate clothes, knowledge of flushing, and washing hands. All children should be able to wipe themselves after going to the bathroom. We do monitor the bathrooms when they are in use by children. Special needs children will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

When a child is ready to transition from diapers or pull-ups to underwear, parents must notify classroom staff prior to sending their child in underwear. Accidents are a normal part of learning to use the toilet independently. However, if a child is consistently experiencing multiple accidents per day, Shepherd of the Hills ELC reserves the right to require the child to return to diapers or pull-ups while continuing to work on toilet-training skills. The child

may resume underwear when staff and family members mutually agree that they are demonstrating readiness for successful toileting in the classroom.

Visitors

All visitors must sign in at the reception area. All visitors must receive permission before visiting a classroom and will be asked to show photo identification. The Director or the receptionist may grant such permission. All volunteers will be under the supervision of a teacher or the Director.

> **Adult Restrooms:** All adults are asked to please use the bathrooms located at the south end of the building. The restrooms in the ELC are reserved for the students of the ELC.

Parking

Parking is on the South side of the building for any ELC events such as field day or the art show. For early or late pickups and drop-offs, parking is on the north side of the building. The speed limit is 10 miles per hour in the entire parking lot. Please respect the handicapped parking places.

Children with Special Needs

Shepherd of the Hills ELC staff will evaluate all students with learning differences to determine if Shepherd of the Hills ELC has the proper facilities to meet those children's needs. After an initial consultation with parent(s) and child, a child may be accepted on a two-week probationary period. This means that if we are unable to meet the needs of the child, we may ask the parents/guardians to remove the child from the center. The parents/guardians of children with special needs may reciprocate with the same notice as above during the probationary period.

Staff Qualifications

All staff members of Shepherd of the Hills meet or exceed the requirements to be an Early Learning Teacher or Assistant Teacher according to Colorado state licensing by the Department of Human Services. These requirements include formal education, training, and work experience in early childhood education. In addition to these qualifications, each staff member participates annually in 15 hours of continued education specific to the profession of early childhood. Of the 15 hours, at least three of the hours are specific training in

social-emotional development. All staff members are routinely trained in classes such as Pediatric/Adult First Aid, CPR, and Universal Precautions. All staff members also participate in "Protecting our Children" training upon hire and every 3 years thereafter. Medication administration training delegation is administered by our school nurse and is updated yearly.

Reporting of Child Abuse

Shepherd of the Hills Early Learning Center is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services. The license indicates that our facility has met the regulations for the operation of a childcare facility. We, therefore, are required to report any suspected child abuse and to make each parent/guardian aware of how to report physical or sexual abuse.

If you suspect or witness child abuse of any kind, it is your responsibility to report it to the police or Human Services. You may call the police in the jurisdiction where you witnessed the abuse or call 911. The number for Human Services is 303.866.5700.

Confidentiality of Student Records

Student records are stored in the Early Learning Center office. Parents have the right to inspect these records (with a 24-hour notice) as well as the child's teacher, Director, and an authorized employee of the licensing agency.

Complaints and Legal Observations

To file a complaint about Shepherd of the Hills ELC contact:

The Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care
1575 Sherman Street Denver, Colorado 80203-1714
Phone 303.866.5700 or 1.800.799.5876 | Fax 303.866.5563

If you would like Shepherd of the Hills to objectively observe your child for any legal reason, a court order must be on file.

BASE Camp Information

Statement of Purpose

Shepherd of the Hills BASE Camp is a ministry of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church and is available to children who attend our program aged 2 ½ -14 years. We strive to provide a safe, fun, Christian learning environment at BASE Camp before and after school and during most school breaks.

BASE Camp Hours of Operation

Hours of operation for BASE Camp on school days are 7:30 am-8:15 am and 3:30 pm-5:30 pm. Hours for BASE Camp during school breaks will be determined and published before each break. Days of operation are Monday through Friday. Days and hours of operation may be altered if not enough children are registered.

BASE Camp will be closed the following days unless otherwise posted:

- September – Labor Day
- October – Teacher In-Service
- November – Fall Break (Thanksgiving)
- December – Last Day of School before Winter Break (AM BASE Camp open)
- December – Christmas Break (Christmas)
- January – New Year's Day
- January – MLK Day
- February – Presidents Day
- February – Teacher In-Service
- March – Spring Break
- April – Good Friday & Easter Monday
- May - Last Day of School (AM BASE Camp open)
- May/June Memorial Day and Summer Camp set up

PLEASE NOTE: WE MAY BE CLOSED ON CAMP DAYS IF TWELVE OR FEWER STUDENTS ARE PRE-REGISTERED AND PRE-PAID

BASE Camp Enrollment

Before your child attends BASE Camp:

- A Statement of Health and a copy of the child's immunization records must be updated annually. Children over six years old need to be updated every two years.
- An Enrollment and Emergency Information Form and Waiver and Indemnity Agreement must be completed.

BASE Camp Fees

	18 months - 2.5 years	2.5 years - 6 years
7:30-8:15am and 3:30-5:30pm	N/A	$33 per/day
7:30-8:15am	N/A	$11 per/day
3:30-5:30pm	N/A	$11 per/portion of an hour (max $22)

Hours and availability for school break BASE Camp will be determined and published prior to the start of any school break. School Break BASE Camp fees will be posted to your account upon registration.

Charges will reflect a daily minimum charge of $11 (preschool) for each day a child is dropped off before 8:15 am or picked up after 3:30 pm. We do not currently offer BASE Camp for students under 2.5 years of age.

No-show Policy: Camp charges are made for all reservations regardless of attendance. A 24-hour notice to cancel a pre-registered day must be received in order to avoid being charged. In the event a 24-hour notice is not received, no refund will be issued.

Morning BASE Camp is available by reservation only. We require at minimum 36-hour notice through the Playground app that your student will need morning BASE Camp. Notice can be sent to the Assistant Director and the Director.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Families who arrive after 5:30 pm to pick up their children will be subject to a late fee of $2.00 per minute, with a $5.00 minimum. The fee will be added to your Playground account.

BASE Camp Drop-Off and Pick-Up

All BASE Camp drop-off and pick-up takes place through the BASE Camp entrance located at the northwest corner of the main school building. This entrance remains locked, so please ring the doorbell for access. When the children are not in the BASE Camp room, a notice indicating their whereabouts will be posted on the outside door. Please remember that our teachers may be with their classes so we ask that you remain patient while they might not be able to answer the door immediately.

Sign In and Sign Out

Children who are signed in or out incorrectly, or not at all, will be charged for the entire morning or afternoon. Children in morning BASE Camp must be signed in by an adult 18 years or older. Charges for morning BASE Camp begin when the child is signed in and end when the child is dismissed to class at 8:15 a.m. Children attending afternoon BASE Camp after school will be signed in by a staff member on duty. All children who are not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be signed in to afternoon BASE Camp by their teacher. Children must be signed out by a parent or other adult at least 18 years of age who is listed on their Enrollment and Emergency Information Form. For safety reasons, each family member will have a unique check-in code. Please ensure you are using your specific code so that we have a record of who picks up and drops off. If you would like someone else to pick up your child, you may either add them to your pick up list in Playground, or for a one-time occasion, you must send written permission including the date, name of the person to pick up, their phone number, and your signature. Children will never be released to unauthorized individuals. Anyone picking up a child should be prepared to show a photo I.D.

Snow Days

If Preschool is canceled due to inclement weather before the school day begins BASE Camp will also be closed. If Preschool is canceled due to inclement weather during the school day already in progress, we will assess the situation

and contact parents to confirm parent awareness of the school closure. We may close BASE Camp early depending on the severity of the weather to help ensure the safety of our students and staff.

Breakfast and Snacks

Children who are in morning BASE Camp are welcome to bring breakfast. Please send food that does not require special preparation. Children who are in afternoon BASE Camp will have a snack provided for them. The snack schedule will be posted weekly on Playground. If your child has multiple or significant food and/or drink allergies, we request that you check the daily menu and provide your child with alternate food when appropriate. The staff at Shepherd of the Hills BASE Camp will not substitute any food or drink for a child if a parent fails to supply alternative food.

Withdrawal from BASE Camp

If Shepherd of the Hills BASE Camp does not meet the needs of a child, the parents are free to withdraw their child(ren) at any time. No fees or penalties will be imposed.

If Shepherd of the Hills BASE Camp requires a child to be withdrawn from the program to ensure the safety and enjoyment of the other children, such action will be clearly communicated to parents. No refunds will be given.

Revision Clause

The ELC Board of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church reserves the right to revise or amend this handbook in any manner, and at any time it deems the revisions or amendments are necessary. These revisions or amendments will be considered to be in the best interests of the staff, students, and parents of Shepherd of the Hills ELC.

Signature page for Parent Handbook.

Please initial and sign.

_____ I have received, read, and understood the Shepherd of the Hills ELC Parent Handbook and agree to abide by these policies.

_____ I understand that it is my responsibility to make monthly tuition payments for my child to attend Preschool at Shepherd of the Hills ELC (please review pages 6 through 7).

_____ I understand that any additional fees will be my responsibility to pay.

_____ I understand that fees associated with BASE Camp accrue daily and will be added to the nearest statement after services are received and will be paid in a timely manner.

Student Name

Parents Signature Date

Kristen Hatton 8/10/2026

Director Name Date