

**Zearing Child Enrichment
Center**

633 Masonic Dr.
Phone: 815-875-2335

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Zearing Child Enrichment Center Inc. We are pleased that you have enrolled your child in our program. We ask that you look over the Parent Handbook and keep it at home for future reference.

The purpose of this Parent Handbook is to provide an organized source of detailed information specifically related to ways that families can partner with the Center to ensure a high quality experience for all. The Center has established a number of policies concerning program and classroom practices. The guidelines have been developed to comply with both state licensing standards and ExceleRate Illinois criteria. The policies and procedures described in this booklet are written to provide a clear description of what parents may expect of Zearing Child Enrichment Center Inc. and what Zearing Child Enrichment Center Inc. expects of parents.

We hope that your experience at our Center is positive and that you are secure in the fact that your child is well cared for. We invite you to become actively involved in all aspects of our center. We believe that a parent is their child's first teacher and we want to be partners with you. Thank you for letting us travel on this journey with you and your child!

Sincerely,

Lauren Widmer - Director

Nicole Sampson – Assistant Director

Lisa Vincent – Business Manager

Welcome

Zearing Child Enrichment Center

Table of Contents

WELCOME

CHILD CARE CENTER OVERVIEW

- Program History
- Program Mission
- Program Philosophy
- Board of Directors
- Licensing
- ExceleRate Illinois

EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

- Program Quality/Standards of Excellence
- Curriculum Goals and Assessment
- Teachers
- Student Teachers

INTERACTION GUIDELINES

- Ratios
- Staff-Child Interactions
- Staff-Family Interactions
- Statement of Commitment
- Discipline/Guidance Methods

OPERATIONS

- Hours
- Check-in/Check-out Procedures
- Child Release Policy
- Child Custody Issues
- Child Abuse & Neglect
- Confidentiality Statement
- Parental Use of Social Media & Internet Sites
- Security

PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

ENROLLMENT

- Application/Eligibility
- Vacation/Sick/Exempt Time
- Holidays/Emergency Closings/In Service Days
- Withdrawal/Dismissal Policy
- Waitlist Policies

FEES & PAYMENTS

- Tuition/Late Payment/Account
- SAL Child Care Assistance Program
- Late Pickup

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

- Attendance/Arrival/Absences
- Daily Schedules
- Rest Time
- Children's Personal Belongings
- Birthdays/Celebrations/Holidays
- Children's Clothing

CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

- Weekly Lessons
- RIE Philosophy
- Technology
- Assessments
- Screenings
- Conferences

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Immunization Policy
- Wellness/Illness/ 'Symptom Free' Policy
- Medication Policy
- Incident/Accident Report
- Meals and Snacks
- Field/Walking Trips

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

- Classroom Newsletters
- Classroom Parent Information Board
- Face-to-Face Interactions
- Program Survey
- Brightwheel Communication
- Parent/Teacher Assessment Plan
- Solution & Resolution Worksheet

Child Care Center Overview

Program History

Zearing Child Enrichment Center, Inc. (ZCEC) opened on October 1, 1974 in the Hampshire Colony Congregational United Church of Christ with an initial capacity of 30 children. In September of 1975, the licensed capacity was increased to 35 children. On August 6, 1979, the center moved into its next site at 28 East Marion Street. The building was purchased by the Board of Directors and extensively remodeled to accommodate a growing need for child care. Enrollment doubled to 70 children. In 1985, the Board again responded to a community need for after-school care and remodeled existing space to include a separate room for school-aged children. At that time the licensed capacity was raised to 85 children and included care programs for children ages 2-12. A generous contribution by our benefactors, Delyte K. and Robert I. Zearing, as well as significant community response to our Capital Fund Drive, enabled us to construct a new 1.1 million dollar center with 13,250 square feet and 10 classrooms. On June 12, 1993, we moved to our present center at 633 Masonic Drive. Licensed capacity is 167 children. On October 28, 2006 the Center officially changed its name to: Zearing Child Enrichment Center, Inc. in honor of our benefactors, Delyte K. and Robert I. and to more appropriately give reference to our mission. In 2012 Learning Ladder of Princeton, IL. merged with ZCEC.

Mission Statement

Zearing Child Enrichment Center is a full day Education based program that is dedicated to providing a nurturing, safe and developmentally appropriate environment for all children. We are committed to enriching children's lives socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically in an atmosphere that enhances creativity and self-confidence.

Zearing Child Enrichment Center Philosophy

We believe that children learn through play and the active manipulation of materials in their environment. Therefore, we structure the daily routine to provide a balance of both teacher and child directed activities. All children are unique individuals and, as such, will grow and learn at their own pace. We believe that positive knowledge, skills, and dispositions are best learned when children are encouraged to learn more about topics that are of interest to them. We believe that early childhood classrooms should be sensitive to these individual differences and provide all children with a variety of experiences.

Board of Directors

Zearing Child Enrichment Center, Inc. is a private Not-for Profit Corporation licensed by the State of Illinois and the Department of Children and Family Services. The Board of Directors is responsible for governing the affairs of the center. There are members of the community that serve on the Board of Directors. Meetings are held monthly on the third Tuesday. Standing committees include: Finance, Personal, Program, Fundraising, and Buildings and Grounds. In order to help the Center with improvements in all areas, the Board of Directors' sponsors the Z Tour Bike Ride each year. Proceeds from this event supplement areas within our budget.

Licensing

Zearing Child Enrichment Center is governed by the State of Illinois and as such must comply to all requirements within the guidance provided to us. We undergo annual evaluations to ensure all requirements are up to standards of the licensing guidelines.

ExceleRate Illinois

Zearing Child Enrichment Center has gone through a rigorous self-assessment and validation from National Louis University to become a Silver Circle of Quality in the State of Illinois Quality Rating System. What this means is that we have gone above and beyond what Licensing requires us to have in the classrooms to provide high quality education to the children in our care.

Educational Framework

Program Quality/Standards of Excellence

[ExceleRate Standard 3D](#): "Program implements evidence-based policies, practices, curriculum and assessments that support development of culturally/racially/linguistically diverse children and families."

[DCFS Standard](#); Section 407.200: "Each child shall be recognized as an individual whose gender, ability differences, personal privacy, choice of activities, cultural, ethnic, and religious background shall be respected."

It is our goal to:

- Base program practices upon current knowledge in the field of child development, early childhood education, and related fields.
- Base program practices upon particular knowledge of each child --- recognizing and respecting the unique nature and potential of each child and his or her family.
- Create and maintain a physically and emotionally safe and healthy setting for children and staff.
- Appreciate and support the close ties between the child and family; home and school.

Curriculum Goals and Assessment

[ExceleRate Standard 1B](#): "Daily activities and interactions within early learning and development programs are indicators that a program is providing an environment and experiences that are safe, healthy and stimulating for children. This includes offering both indoor and outdoor activities to support varied learning experiences. To ensure that young children's experiences are developmentally appropriate, applicants are expected to incorporate a comprehensive curriculum and child assessment system that are aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to Three and Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Age Three to Five. Providing necessary adaptations to a child's experience and environment allows all children, including those with special needs, to learn, grow and develop."

[DCFS Standard](#); Section 407.200: "The facility shall provide a basic program of activities geared to the age levels and developmental needs of the children served. The daily program of the facility shall provide experiences which promote the individual child's growth and well-being and the development of self-help and communication skills, social competence, and positive self-identity."

The early years in a child's life set the tone for future learning. Our goal at Zearing Child Enrichment Center is to stay current on research in child development so that we are able to build a foundation for each child that lasts a lifetime. Our curriculum is Creative Curriculum, which is designed with specific learning objectives for each age level and child, integrating the Teaching Strategies Assessment tool, which guides the teacher's development and implementation of classroom activities, individualized learning, and a predictable yet responsive daily schedule.

A focus of our curriculum is the classroom learning centers. In these centers, children learn through extended and self-directed play. These "hands-on" learning centers develop knowledge, skills, and abilities in the domains of language, art, fine motor, math, science, social studies, dramatic play, and gross motor. Young children benefit most from first-hand discovery and exploration; therefore many opportunities for discovery and exploration are an intricate part of these learning centers. Critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills are encouraged by adults through questioning, listening, respect and patience.

Creative Curriculum is being implemented in a manner that reflects sensitivity to family home values, beliefs, experiences and language.

Teachers:

ExceleRate Standard 4A & 4B: "High-quality programs are directed by administrators who have the formal education and professional preparedness to manage the program and lead all staff in providing the most up-to-date practices for educational development. Staff that work with children are also expected to have appropriate education and professional training to engage with children and families in their assigned age groups."

DCFS Standard: Section 407.120; In-service training is being provided as required for the child care director and each member of the child care staff.

Our staff requirements and qualifications exceed the minimum DCFS Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers. All full and part-time staff members are required to complete First Aid and CPR training. All staff members meet and/or exceed the educational and/or experience requirements by DCFS. All of our staff undergoes state and federal criminal background checks, pre-employment physicals, and references are thoroughly checked. At all times, there is at least one person per classroom who is CPR/First Aid Certified- often there are two persons. For more information about any staff member, please read our staff information bulletin board. In addition our staff is dedicated to continuing their own professional growth by participating in regular formal and informal continuing education experiences. We recognize that there are always new things to learn and additional ways to improve the program. This obvious appreciation for the value of education serves to reinforce for children and adults the positive ongoing goals, attitudes, and skills needed for lifelong learning and working with others in a diverse society. Each staff member is required to complete 20 or more hours of in-service or workshop training per year, and/or take advanced coursework in their field.

Student Teachers:

The Center is designed to provide students in the IVCC Early Childhood Education program, along with other early childhood college programs, with opportunities for supervised hands-on experience with young children. Knowledge gained through prerequisite coursework in Early Childhood Education prepares students to take full advantage of this opportunity for fieldwork. Students may engage in observations, field experiences, and student teaching experiences on-site. This is approved through the course instructor, program coordinator/center director, and teachers.

The Early Childhood Education curriculum requires students who are pursuing the Associate of Applied Science degree with two student teaching experiences. All student teachers will complete the same health and safety precautions as Center employees (CANTS check, health/physical, letters of reference, and drug testing) and will

at ALL times be supervised by staff. Student teachers will comply with all policies and regulations set forth in the Center’s personnel manual. Parents will be notified of student teacher placements within the Center.

Student teachers will assist the center staff by implementing developmentally appropriate activities that enhance and support the classroom curriculum. Each student teacher will be assigned a child to assess throughout the semester, document the child’s work and developmental progress, consult with the teacher, and share with the child’s parents in a parent-teacher conference at the end of the semester.

Interaction Guidelines

Ratios

The Center is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services *Part 407 Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers (Revised Nov., 2000)* and strives to meet or exceed all standards set for child care centers. A licensing representative visits the Center to ensure compliance with all state regulations. Licensing procedures require that the Center is in compliance with state fire marshal codes and the public health department codes. The estimated licensed capacity for each classroom is as follows (final licensing capacity will be determined by the licensing representative):

- Infant as young as 6 weeks: Maximum capacity at any one time = 12 children
Adult: child ratio = 1 adult to every 4 children
- Infant/Toddler as young as 12 months: Maximum capacity at any one time = 12 children
Adult: child ratio = 1 adult to every 4 children
- Toddler/Two’s as young as 15 months: Maximum capacity at any one time = 15 children
Adult: child ratio = 1 adult to every 5 children
- Two’s as young as 24 months: Maximum capacity at any one time = 16 children
Adult: child ratio- 1 adult to every 8 children
- Preschool A, B, & C 3-5 years: Maximum capacity at any one time = 20 children
Adult: child ratio = 1 adult to every 10 children
- School Age A & B 5-12 years: Maximum capacity at any one time = 20 children
Adult: child ratio = 1 adult to every 20 children

Staff-Child Interactions

We make every effort for all children to know and be known by all adults in our classroom environment so that they are comfortable interacting with and seeking assistance from any adult. Each child is assigned a primary classroom with a teacher(s) with the opportunity to have student teachers as well. We make an effort for all teachers to know all of the children in their area. Because we strive to encourage diverse interactions and not gender stereotypes, we address children as frequently as possible by their individual names or we refer to groups of children as “friends”.

Staff-Family Interactions

ZCEC staff strives to communicate regularly and effectively with families so that their perspectives can be incorporated into our understanding of the child’s development, our curriculum planning and our assessments. In addition to a detailed Parent Handbook, we have scheduled parent

meetings/conferences, monthly newsletters, parent information boards, parent feedback forms, family & child questionnaires, frequent face-to-face interactions, and Brightwheel. Brightwheel is a phone app that allows our teachers and parents to communicate throughout the day. The parents receive updates about their child's day in real time. We share information from toileting and feeding to playing and learning.

[ExceleRate Standard 2A](#): "Engaging and building strong partnerships with families fosters a child's learning and development both in and out of the child's home. That's why it is critical to involve families in authentic opportunities to promote quality experiences and environments for children. There are four hallmarks for effective family and community engagement: regular, effective two-way communications; opportunities for families to get to know one another; education about child growth and development; and making connections to available community resources. Helping families navigate transitions also provides meaningful support to children so that they can continue to succeed as they progress in their learning, growth and development."

[DCFS Standard](#): Section 407.200; "The staff of the day care center shall have a written plan for encouraging parents to visit the center to observe and participate in their children's experience. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, or family friends with a parents approval, shall be allowed to visit the center without an appointment any time during normal hours of operation.

Statement of Commitment

Zearing Child Enrichment Center encourages parents and extended family members to come in during the day. This can be at any time or during story time, music time, or any other daily events that occur.

Zearing Child Enrichment Center shares the following values as a guide for interactions among staff members, between staff and children, between staff and parents and between staff and Board Members.

- We strive to respect each individual and work to create a positive emotional climate for all learners with sensitivity to differences in age, ability, background, language, culture, religion and family structure.
- We use direct eye contact, smiles, and a warm tone of voice, positive touch, social conversations and joint laughter to support the development of positive working relationships.
- We emphasize the need to work as a team and promote team building processes.
- We strive to build community partnerships and advocate for families and children both in the center and the Princeton community.

Discipline/Guidance Methods

It is the nature of young children to strive toward autonomy. We know that young children are strong, capable and curious. The purpose of discipline is to help children develop self-control and to become responsible for their own behavior. Knowing what behavior is appropriate or acceptable in a situation is an important skill. We are committed to helping children learn to express feelings appropriately, to consider other people's feelings and to negotiate their own conflicts. It is our goal to help children broaden and deepen their self-control, so they are better able to work both independently and in collaboration with other children and adults in the classroom so they can satisfy their curiosity and achieve autonomy. It is our intent to provide the experiences and the emotional and physical

environment that rewards and supports growth in self-control. We recognize the powerful effect that positive consequences can have in supporting desirable behavior.

A positive discipline program is best accomplished by keying in on the good behaviors of children and by being consistent with discipline procedures. The children may assist in setting rules/limits of the classroom as they identify as necessary. Limits should be clear and understandable to the staff and children and consistently enforced. Rules/limits should be observable, reasonable and enforceable. The Center abides by the general classification of rules/limits as such:

- shall not hurt/harm, or make any such attempts to other children, self or staff
- shall not hurt/harm/damage property of the center or property of an individual
- shall not use inappropriate language or gestures that may cause harm to another individual

Disciplinary action may be necessary when rules are broken. The following procedure is recommended:

- 1) Discuss with the child the inappropriateness of his/her actions;
- 2) Attempt to redirect the child's behavior to an acceptable activity and remind child as to why he/she is unable to continue playing or participating in the activity;
- 3) Remove the child from the activity/center area—time to oneself may be needed or a simple redirection to another area.

A written communication report may be sent home to notify parents/guardians of a behavioral incident that occurred during the day. Parents/guardians will be invited to collaborate with the Center staff in planning strategies to address any serious behavior problems.

Operations

ExceleRate Standard 3A: "Research has demonstrated that strong leadership and management practices make a tangible difference in the quality of care and education provided. This is accomplished by incorporating high-quality administrative practices, regularly assessing overall program operations and establishing program goals to continually improve the quality of the program. Careful attention to staff-to-child ratios and the size of the groups within classrooms are additional critical factors to ensure the program maintains a high quality environment where all children can balance individual attention with group activities and social development. The program also recognizes the diversity of families and children by ensuring that all policies and practices are linguistically and culturally appropriate."

DCFS Standard: The members of the governing body of the day care center shall be legally responsible to the Department for maintaining the standards set forth in this Part. The members of the governing body shall be of reputable and responsible character. The governing body may delegate responsibility for day-to-day compliance with the standards to the day care center director.

Hours

The Center is open Monday – Friday from 6:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. If, at any time, children are not enrolled for later hours in the day, the administrator in charge may choose to close the Center early. Parent/guardian **MUST** contact the Center by 8:30am if child will be absent on a particular day. All students must arrive by 8:30am. Late drop offs must be pre-approved by administration and should only be for necessary appointments. We respectfully ask, last pick up be by 4:45pm in order to have time to communicate with your child's teacher, to be clocked out and out of the building by 5:00pm as the center doors close.

Check In/Check Out Procedures

- The parent/guardian must accompany their child/children into and out of the classroom each day. Upon arrival at the Center, the child must be "signed in" by the parent/guardian on the IPAD located at the front office upon arrival. Upon departure, the parent/guardian or authorized individual will be permitted into the classroom to pick-up the child, and complete the "sign-out" on the IPAD located at the front office. At any time throughout the day, parents or extended family may drop-in to visit with their child/children. If a parent or extended family member drops in for a planned activity or to visit, they must sign in up front with administration before going back to the classroom. If, at any time, the parent needs to remove the child from the Center for a temporary time due to an appointment, the parent **MUST** sign-out the child upon departing the facility and sign back in when the child returns. The parent must proceed to bring the child to his/her classroom. At all times, the parent must inform the teacher of his/her actions.

Child release Procedures

- Only persons authorized by the parent/guardian will be permitted to take a child from the Center, unless other arrangements are communicated in writing via Brightwheel or communicated to administration by the parent/guardian. A photo ID may be required prior to releasing a child to a person other than the parent/guardian.
- A child's attendance hours are established upon enrollment. A Child Care Weekly Fees Agreement will be signed and dated upon initial enrollment by the parent/guardian and the Director. Any permanent changes must be reported to the Center Director in writing and granted approval prior to change being implemented. All changes will be considered based on enrollment capacity and availability.
- If a parent/guardian has been requested to work overtime and later child pick-up time is needed, the parent must contact the Center immediately to inquire of availability. Center management will strive to adhere to changes in work schedules, although licensing capacity/classroom must be adhered to. Late fees will not be charged, as long as the Center has been notified and approval has been granted.

Child Custody Issues

It is the Center's intent to meet the needs of children especially when the parents may be experiencing difficult situations such as a divorce, separation, or remarriage. However, the Center cannot legally restrict the non-custodial parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up unless the Center has been furnished with current legal documents. Copies of these court documents must be kept in the child's file.

Child Abuse & Neglect

If we suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, we are required to report it to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and/or to a law enforcement agency.

Confidentiality Statement

All child registration information, including medical information is confidential and kept in a locked file cabinet. The Administration is the only staff to have access to these files. The only exception is the emergency card- which is kept in a card file on the front desk. Classrooms also have copies placed with their first aid kits. Child Assessment files are kept confidential. These files include assessment results, progress reports, and notes from parent conferences and are kept in the classrooms filed away. Personal family issues that are shared with the Director or Teacher will be kept confidential- and only those persons who may need to know for the safety and well-being of the child will be informed.

Zearing Child Enrichment Center Inc. policy on Parental use of Social Media and Internet Sites

Social Media sites are now widely used and we understand how these types of sites allow people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites can be used inappropriately by expressing negative or offensive views of staff, children, the Center, schools, and so on, or by posting pictures of or personal information about the children at the Center.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage social media sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents. We want to protect our children, staff and anyone who would be associated with ZCEC from any negative effects of social media sites. This policy will clarify what ZCEC considers appropriate and inappropriate use of social media sites by parents and will set out the procedures and actions that ZCEC will follow when it considers parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social media negatively towards the Center, its staff or children, and anyone else associated with ZCEC.

Appropriate use of social media sites by parents

Social Media sites have the potential to be beneficial to families by showing pictures of their child's learning, achievements, and daily happenings at the center. It is another way to communicate to the staff at ZCEC to ask questions and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, the Center recognizes that many parents and other family members will have personal social media accounts, which they might use to discuss, and share pictures, with friends and acquaintances. Please consider the following information prior to posting comments about or pictures of the Center, its staff, and children/families, or anyone else associated with ZCEC:

- Is this an appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals who may not be justified, particularly if the Center has not yet had a chance to investigate or do you have all of the information?
- Would a private and confidential discussion with the Center Director or teacher be more appropriate?
- Are images of children or the staff included in the post without having received prior permission to post those images?

Inappropriate use of social media sites by parents

Although social media sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the Center and those associated with it, it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other ways, such as a private and confidential discussion with the Director, or using the Center Solution and Resolution process are a much better way to handle these types of issues. Parents are free to post photos of their own child at play in the Center, but to respect the privacy and confidentiality of other

enrolled children; parents are not to post photos of other ZCEC children on social networking sites, even if those children are photographed at play with their own children. No one, but the parents or staff, shall post identities or personal information regarding children, parents or staff on any social networking site without first having obtained express, written permission to do so.

ZCEC considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social media sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or children at the Center;
- Making complaints about the center/staff/children at the Center;
- Making defamatory statements about the center or staff at the Center
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific children/staff at the Center
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which threaten violence.
- Posting pictures of the children at the Center without having first received parental approval to do so.

Procedure ZCEC will follow if inappropriate social media is used

The Center will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realize when they have used social media sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the Center will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social media site. If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social media sites in a manner that the Center considers inappropriate, the Center will take the following actions:

1. Set out the Center's concerns in writing, giving the parent a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
2. The Center has the right to terminate enrollment at any time if we feel that the policies have been disregarded.
3. If the family enrollment has been terminated and the issue is still continuing with social media the Center will take appropriate legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances otherwise warrant.

Security

Your child's safety and security is foremost in our minds. Our front doors are locked and anyone entering is let in with a buzzer/lock-release, by administration. Parents are typically the persons who pick up their children; however parents can indicate on the emergency card any other persons who have permission to pick up your child. We will ask the person to show identification. If your child will be picked up by someone not on the emergency card, we will need notification in writing/ or by phone/ or in person of this change. In some child custody circumstances, will need court papers to prevent a parent/family member from picking up a child.

We also have security cameras located at the front door, big room, all classrooms, parking lots and on our playgrounds.

Procedures and Guidelines

Enrollment

Application/Eligibility

A completed Enrollment/Registration Application must be filled out and submitted through ZCEC.org. When the application is received in our office, the child/children are placed in his/her classroom or a waiting list. ZCEC only accepts Monday-Friday full time enrollment.

The Center is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The Center maintains a licensed capacity for each classroom, therefore once the enrollments meet that capacity children will be placed on a waiting list and called when the first available opening exists, based on the age of child/classroom availability and date placed on the waiting list. ZCEC is an education based program that believes strongly in consistency of care, the least amount of transitions, and a consistent discipline approach. With this, we require that if you choose a secondary program for your child, they leave after lunch and do not return to our program for the day. All children must be enrolled at Zearing Child Enrichment Center Inc. before attending. Once the decision to enroll is made, families must complete the following; sign where applicable, and return these to the Center prior to the child's first day of attendance:

The following is required for each child enrolled in the Center:

1. Application for admission
2. Parent/consent/tuition agreement forms
3. Parent information form
4. Medical examination and current immunizations by a licensed physician dated no more than 6 months prior to enrollment
5. A completed TB (tuberculin skin test) received no more than 6 months prior to enrollment for children over 1 (one) year of age or proof of exemption
6. Verification of a Lead Screening Test or proof of exemption
7. Completed Child and Adult Care Food Program application form. (Families not eligible must state "NA" and sign the bottom of the form)
8. Completed emergency card
9. Enrollment fee (non-refundable) of \$50.00 and an additional \$20.00/child
10. Activity fee of \$30.00/per child non-refundable after 30/days from enrollment date
11. A re-enrollment fee of \$30.00/\$40.00
12. Signature form; Center policies/Parent Handbook
13. Discipline and Guidance Policy
14. Developmental Screening form
15. Brightwheel Information

As long as a child remains enrolled at Zearing Child Enrichment Center Inc., all information in the file must be updated to remain current or enrollment may be subject to termination.

Children will be accepted without regard to race, color or national origin.

To help new families with the transition to our Center we require participation in the following before the enrollment process is complete:

- Center tour
- Program Orientation & Parent Handbook review
- Meet the Teacher & Classroom tour

Vacation/Sick/Exempt Time

The parent/guardian is entitled to request time for which you are exempt from payment by completing an *Exempt Time Request Form*. These time/hours may be used for child illness, vacation, or personal reasons. (May be used after a 60-day probation period) Exempt time will not roll over to the next year. Students in our School Age department and students utilizing SAL Child Care Connections do not receive exempt time.

Once all 'exempt time' is used up for the year, full payment will be charged for the scheduled days of care.

Holidays/Emergency Closings/In Service Days

The Center is closed for 7 (seven) holidays during the year for which no fee is assessed. These holidays include:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day/and the day After
- Christmas Day

The center may also be closed for two additional "floating holidays": the day before/after Christmas and the day before/after New Year's Day. Child care fees are not assessed for the days when the center is closed. Advance notice is posted when the center is closed. In weather emergencies, please take note of Brightwheel Messages.

- *ZCEC is closed the 2nd Monday of May and November.*

These are non-student days that we have scheduled in order to help teachers and classified employees enhance their professional development. Regular tuition fees will apply for these 2 days. All Staff of ZCEC are required to attend both in service days.

Withdrawal/Dismissal Policy

Withdrawal from the Center requires a two-week notification to the Director/Assistant Director and completing a *Withdrawal Form*. Failure to comply with this procedure will result in a two-week fee assessed based on your child's current scheduled enrollment.

Dismissal from the Center may be required due to one or more of the following circumstances:

- Failure to comply with the *Child Care Fees Agreement* -- dismissal may result if childcare fees have not been paid for 2 (two) or more weeks.
- Failure of child to make a positive adjustment within the first 3 (three) weeks of enrollment. This may include situations in which child:
 1. Does not adapt to the Center/classroom routine.
 2. Does not follow the guidelines required by the Center.
 3. Presents behavior that negatively affects the health, safety, and well-being of

others.

Either party may request a conference with the appropriate Center staff/parent at any time. Any child; who, after attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrates an inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the center, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be discharged from our center.

In all instances, when it has been determined that it is in the best interest of the child to terminate enrollment, the child's and parents' needs shall be considered by planning with the parents to meet the child's needs when he or she leaves our center, including referrals to other agencies or facilities.

Waitlist Policies

We maintain waiting lists for our center. There is one for each classroom we serve here at the Zearing Child Enrichment Center Inc. As the list is usually long, especially for the Infant/Toddler Classroom, it is important to apply as early as possible. The average wait time for enrollment varies depending on our enrollment in each classroom.

As children continue to age while on the waiting list, they are automatically considered for space in the next age appropriate classroom.

A "wait list number" is generated for each application. This number is based solely on the date the application is received by the Director. When we have a vacancy, the Director/Assistant Director of the center will contact you and go over all the enrollment procedures. Being on the waitlist does not guarantee the start date you are requesting, due to the enrollment of the center. The wait list is for you to get the first available opening in the classroom you are requesting. Beginning at the top of the list, parents are notified that the space is available for their child. You also can check in with the Director/Assistant Director to see where you might be on the list.

Parents are given 48 hours to notify us of their decision to either accept or decline enrollment. If the space is declined, the child drops to the bottom of the waiting list. The date of the application will then change to the date the space was declined. If parents fail to contact us within the 48 hour period, the assumption is made that the family is no longer interested in our program and the child is removed from the waiting list.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify ZCEC of any changes in contact information. If parents cannot be reached due to invalid contact information, the child is removed from the waiting list.

The Center reserves the right to take children on the basis of different priorities. The order is as follows: 1) siblings of current families, 2) ZCEC Faculty/Staff. Within each of these categories, enrollment is offered according to the date applications are received and the availability of age-related openings.

Fees & Payments

Tuition/Late Payment/Account

A non-refundable registration fee (\$50.00 and \$20.00 for each additional child; \$30.00/\$40.00 re-enrollment) and a \$30.00 Activity Fee (accessed yearly) must accompany the enrollment/registration forms. All fees MUST be paid on Monday of the current week of attendance. All fees are payable to Zearing Child Enrichment Center (ZCEC) and may be dropped into the payment box located in the Reception area. Cash payments should be placed in one of the envelopes provided and the envelope label should be fully completed. Balances can be checked via Brightwheel online bill pay.

Each child's attendance days and hours are set at the time of registration and a weekly fee is determined by the ZCEC Tuition Structure.

All fees are to be paid by check, cash, credit/debit card, money order, or online through Brightwheel. There is a \$35.00 fee assessed for any returned check. If this happens twice, ZCEC requires that payment be made with cash or a money order only. All fees are non-refundable.

Tuition for child care services is due on Monday for that week of care. Your child's attendance days are set at enrollment time. Brightwheel will email you invoices. It is your responsibility to pay each Monday and check with the Administration regarding any charges that you do not understand. All child care fees must be paid in full by the last of the month. A 2% service fee or \$5.00 minimum (the greater of) will be added to account balances that are not paid in full the last day of each month.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Subsidy Program pays only a portion of the cost needed for child care services. We work with Child Care Connection to help assist you with paying for child care. The Director/Office Manager will assist you with the application. Parents are required to pay regular child care fees until they are approved through Child Care Connection or wait till approved by CCC. After approval parents will pay the copay and the difference between what ZCEC charges and what CCC will pay.

The additional co-payments assessed, are determined by using the IDHS income eligibility guidelines. And they require 80% attendance to pay parent subsidized tuition per week/month. Less than 80% attendance will require the parent to pay days not paid by the IDHS at regular tuition rate.

FAILURE TO PAY CHILD CARE TUITION WILL RESULT IN TUITION BEING TURNED OVER TO COLLECTIONS AND, Parent/Guardian will pay a collection fee of 25% of the total owed when sent to collection, all attorney fees, and court costs incurred by the creditor.

Late Pickup: The center closes at 5:00 p.m. each day. Parents must be in the building by 4:50pm at the latest. The clock by the front desk will be considered the official time. Late fees are assessed if your child is not out of the building by 5:00pm. The fee is calculated at \$10.00 for any part of the first 5 minutes, and \$1.00 for each additional minute after 5:05 p.m. Repeated failure to pick up your child on time can result in enrollment termination. The late fee will be posted to your account the next business day. In the event that parents are asked to work over time, the administration asks that you communicate that with us and prior approval is necessary.

If we have not heard from the parent and we have not been able to contact other authorized persons listed on the child's enrollment form by 5:30 p.m., we consider a child abandoned and will call the police.

Classroom Guidelines

Teaching staff develops individual relationships with children by providing care that is responsive, attentive, consistent, comforting, supportive, and culturally sensitive.

Attendance/Arrival/Absences

If a child/children will be absent, the parent/guardian MUST contact the Center by 8:30am to inform us of an absence for that day.

Daily Schedules

Teachers organize time and space on a daily basis to allow children to work or play individually and in pairs, to come together in small groups, and to engage as a whole group. Each individual classroom has a daily schedule posted on the classroom Parent Information Board.

Although your children begin learning from the time they are dropped off in our care, all classrooms begin curriculum instruction at **8:30 am**. In order for children to receive the full benefit of our program and to participate with the group activities, we ask that all children be here by this time.

Rest Time

A rest time is provided after lunch for the children. Children will be required to rest on their cots for approximately 30-60 minutes. Those children who sleep will be allowed to continue to rest for up to 2 (two) hours. Quiet activities will be provided for the remainder of the rest time for those children who are unable to sleep.

Individual cots and sheets are provided for each child. Parents/guardians are requested to provide a small blanket and pillow for their child. A small stuffed animal/toy from home may also help the child adjust to nap time. All items from home must be clearly labeled with the child's name.

Parents/guardians must take their child's blanket home at the end of each week for washing. Cots will be sanitized weekly (or as needed), and sheets will be washed on a weekly basis (or as needed).

Children's Personal Belongings

Children frequently want to share items and treasures from home with their class. Such items are welcomed if they support the topic being studied.

We **discourage bringing toys** from home; although children may bring a stuffed animal for rest time, it must remain in the child's cubby until rest time or used only for adjustment purposes to the classroom. Toys and other treasures should remain at home, except for the days when your child is asked to bring something for *Show and Share*.

Any toys brought to the Center from home will be kept in the child's cubby until he/she goes home. This policy will protect the safety of children's personal belongings, as well as preventing potential health hazards.

[The Center does not allow toys of violence like guns, swords, or violent action figures even as part of a costume.](#)

Birthdays/Celebrations/Holidays

Please let your classroom teachers know of any holidays or special traditions that your family celebrates. We do have a few center traditions that we celebrate. These will be announced as we celebrate them.

The Center celebrates the children's birthdays in age-appropriate ways in the classroom. The birthday celebration, however, is purposefully kept simple and child-centered.

Food brought into the Center must be store-bought and labeled with the ingredients.

These will be served during morning or afternoon snack time and parents are welcome to join the children.

Children's Clothing

Children should wear comfortable clothes that they can manage quite independently, and are not afraid of getting dirty. Please make sure your child can manage the buttons, snaps and buckles on his/her clothes. Under the crotch snaps are difficult, as are overalls and bodysuits. These items can slow down a child's use of the bathroom and lead to accidents.

Young children should be able to actively participate in all our activities. Our suggestion to parents is to make getting messy OK. Young children are designed to be hands-on learners. They gather knowledge by touching, tasting, shaking, dumping, manipulating, spilling, tossing and rolling in the world they come in contact with every day. A child, who has messy clothes at the end of the day, is a child who learned something. Quality early learning goes hand in hand with a little bit of messiness. We realize that there is a difference between messy and filthy. If you pick up your child and their face and hands are filthy and their nose is crusty they did not get proper care and attention, and this should be reported to administration.

Children should wear athletic type shoes which enable them to run, jump, and climb. Sandals, flip-flops and jellies are not appropriate for school and the playground and often lead to accidents. Although much of our playground is shaded, hats or other sun protection are encouraged. Sun block (SPF 15 or higher) can be applied if a topical ointment form is signed.

Please make sure your child has a complete extra change of clothes labeled with his/her name at school appropriate for the season. Dressing in layers makes sense if your child is sensitive to the cold or heat. We go outside 2 to 3 times per day, except in heavy rain, extremely hot or extremely cold and windy weather. Please make sure to send sufficient outerwear (coat, hat, boots, and/or mittens) for your child when necessary. Occasionally we need to loan children clothing items. These should be washed and returned after use. PLEASE LABEL all personal items.

ZCEC will not replace damaged or lost items of clothing/accessories.

Classroom Curriculum/Classroom Program for Learning

Weekly Lessons

Each teacher develops lesson plans around the emerging skills of the children along with using our curriculum "Creative Curriculum". The daily schedule is predictable yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of the children. Activities encourage exploration, experimentation, and discovery while promoting interaction. Lesson plans are available on the classroom Parent Boards and through the Teaching Strategies app.

Infant/Toddler Curriculum:

We recognize that infant's schedules are unique and individual. Teachers/staff will respect the individual schedule of each infant. The home-like environment provides many opportunities for optimum growth and development. The trained staff provides daily scheduled activities to stimulate each child's emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development. As infants and toddlers learn best through their senses, play materials will include a range of interesting things to see, touch, and feel. Frequent communication with parents/guardians is extremely important in providing quality care and education for infants and toddlers.

Two's Curriculum:

Children learn about the relevant world in which they live. They explore and investigate topics that are meaningful to them. Learning centers/stations provide them many opportunities to engage in educational thought processing, while at the same time build on their physical skills, social skills and emotional skills. The world and all its surroundings are fascinating, and your child will try to imitate adult behavior. We arrange the two's classroom into interest areas where he/she can explore materials and interact with others.

Preschool Curriculum:

At this age, your child is an active learner; and our goal is to provide materials and an environment that has them using their own hands... to develop a real understanding of their surroundings. Active learning is also interacting with their peers and teachers in order to learn new concepts. In our preschool classroom, we have many materials that are organized in various learning areas. Your child's day will include circle times, with songs, new learning, sharing and discussions of what is going on in their everyday lives. They are free to move throughout the classroom ... working with art materials, dramatic play, books, blocks, fine motor materials, as well as participating in a number of teacher directed activities. We are also aware of kindergarten entrance expectations, and we will work with your children to ensure that he/she is competent in those skills.

School Age:

We recognize the growing physical, intellectual, and social competence of the increasingly independent school-age child. They are eager to achieve socially and academically while expanding their knowledge of the world, 5 to 12 year olds seek new challenges, close friendships, and increasing responsibilities. Our programs offer enriching learning opportunities in a fun environment for maturing school-age children. This includes before/after school care, back-up or care for school holiday and closings, and exciting summer programs for children up to 12 years of age.

RIE Philosophy

At ZCEC, beginning at 6 weeks of age we implement the RIE philosophy that encourages parents to join us in this method. The Rie philosophy really focuses on children beginning at infancy to be respected, communicated with, and acknowledged (feelings, responses, and thoughts).

Technology

The children at ZCEC benefit most from active learning. Consequently, our use of video, computers/pads are limited. Teachers will on occasion supplement the curriculum with a short educational clip to explore the topic of discussion.

ExceleRate Standard 1E: *Assessments*

We use the Teaching Strategies Assessment tool to track the progress and performance of each child (ages six weeks to five years of age). Parents have access to their child's assessment records via the Teaching Strategies app. We use conferences as a time to share the information with parents.

ExceleRate Standard 1D: *Screenings*

We use Ages and Stages Screening tool for children 6 weeks to preschool, in order to screen for any developmental delays such as speech, cognitive, physical, or social. We complete a screening on each child within 60 days of starting and each child is annually screened with the results being shared with the families.

ExceleRate Standard 2A: *Conferences*

Conference time provides a great opportunity to discuss goals, concerns and expectations. We encourage parents and staff to work together to make decisions about how to best support individual children's development and learning. A conference may be requested at any time the parent or staff expresses a need. We hold conferences at least twice a year and whenever needed.

Frequent communication with parents/guardians is extremely important in providing quality care and education for young children. Your involvement in their learning/educational process is of great value to the staff, as well as lifelong learning for the child.

It is the policy of the Center to respect the values of ALL families, children and staff; therefore holidays are not celebrated within the program curriculum. Therefore, celebrations at our center are limited to those occasions that are **specific** to the members of the classroom community. These celebrations might include events or accomplishments specific to the individual child, such as loss of a tooth, learning to tie his/her shoes, or a birthday. A family member or staff member in recognition of a child or staff birthday may provide special treats.

Health & Safety

Immunization Policy

All children MUST have their immunizations up to date in order to attend Zearing Child Enrichment Center.

Wellness/Illness 'Symptom Free' Policy

The Center's wellness/illness policy is for the benefit of the health and well being of all children and staff. Illnesses that require a child to stay home include:

- **Fever.** A warning that all is not right with the body. If your child has a fever of 100.5 degrees or higher after adding a degree under the arm, then you must keep your child at home for 24 hours.
- **Vomiting.** Chronic; If your child vomited more than one time in a day. You must keep your child at home until 24 hours after his/her last vomits.
- **Diarrhea.** After the second really loose/uncontained stool or if hard cramping, the child must stay home 24 hours after the last episode.
- **Strep throat.** A sore throat would be cause for concern and
- **Unexplained rashes** or a diagnosed contagious rash.
- **Persistent cough and/or thick nasal discharge.**
- **Contagious infestations or infections** (head lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, etc). A child must be nit-free of any head lice prior to returning to the Center.
- **Chicken pox** – lesions must be crusted over before the child is allowed to return to the Center.
- **Conjunctivitis** commonly referred to as "pink-eye" – an inflammation of the eye characterized by discharge, discoloration, and matting of the eye. A child must be on medication for 24 hours prior to returning to the Center.
- **Covid-19** Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea

If a child develops symptoms of illness during the day, the parent (s) will be notified to make arrangements for the child to be picked up immediately. The child will be isolated in the Center office until the arrival of the parent/guardian.

It is important that children play outdoors and get fresh air and exercise. Children will play outdoors at least two times per day weather permitting. It is our policy that children who are too sick to play outdoors are too sick to attend the Center. (This is all year around)

Staff will inform parents/guardians of contagious and communicable diseases through Brightwheel.

All children must be fever/symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Medication Policy

Parents/guardians must complete the *Daily Medical Consent Form* that their child is to be given any type of medication. ALL *prescribed* medications must be in the original container indicating the child's name, type, date of prescription, amount to be dispensed, and the name of the physician. Any *over-the-counter* medications must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name. Dosages will only be given according to the instructions on the container and all prescription and non-prescriptions need Physician's instructions and signature. The parent must contact their doctor's office and when we receive forms back that is when we will give the medications.

ALL medications must be given to the Administration for proper storage.

Incident/Accident Reports

The administration and staff at the Center will make every effort to ensure the safety and welfare of each child.

In the event of minor incidents (slight cut, bruise, scrape), we will attend immediately to the incident and inform parents/guardians when the child is picked up. Parents/guardians will be called if there is any head/face injury. An incident report is documented and remains on file at the Center.

In the event of a serious accident or medical emergency for a child, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately. If unable to contact either parent/guardian, the emergency contact person indicated on the emergency card and enrollment form will be contacted. *For this reason, it is important that emergency telephone numbers and contacts are updated.* If your child requires medical attention, a staff member will remain with your child until someone arrives. In the event that parents/guardians or emergency contact persons are unavailable, the child may be transported to OSF Hospital in Princeton for medical assessment and/or treatment. An accident report is completed by the attending staff member, a copy is provided to the parent/guardian, and a copy is placed within the child's file.

Meals and Snacks

The Center participates in the Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program. This is available to all children without regard to race, color, sex, disability, age, or national origin. Nutritious foods are served that conform to the meal pattern requirements of the program. Breakfast, lunch, and mid-afternoon snack are served daily.

The menu for the month is posted on the parent bulletin board in the reception area and in all classrooms, zcec.org and Brightwheel.

All meals are eaten with supervising adults who assist children to serve themselves, encourage them to try all meal components, and encourage appropriate table manners. Meals and snack times will be posted on the individual classroom schedules.

Children are NOT allowed to bring candy or gum to the Center. This includes items such as breakfast foods occasionally given to children by parents on the way to the Center. Parents/guardians may bring occasional treats/snacks to celebrate a child's birthday or holiday celebrations. Arrangements for treats brought in by parents/guardians should be made in advance with the classroom teacher. Food brought in for this purpose must arrive unopened as packaged by the bakery or manufacturer or it shall not be accepted.

Field/Walking Trips

Topics of study in the Center often lead the children and staff to take field trips for further investigation. There may be many possibilities for on-site investigations and/or walking excursions. On occasion, transportation may be requested for community field trips. In this case, a separate permission form will be available for parent/guardian signature.

Parents as Partners

ExceleRate Standard: "Engaging and building strong partnerships with families fosters a child's learning, growth and development both in and out of the child's home. That's why it is critical to involve families in authentic opportunities to promote quality experiences and environments for children. There are four hallmarks for effective family and community engagement: regular, effective two-way communications; opportunities for families to get to know one another; education about child growth and development; and making connections to available community resources. Helping families navigate transitions also provides meaningful support to children so that they can continue to succeed as they progress in their learning, growth and development."

DCFS Standard: The staff of the day care center shall have a written plan for encouraging parents to visit the center to observe and participate in their children's experience. Parents shall be allowed to visit the center without an appointment any time during normal hours of operation.

Building a strong bond between home and school is encouraged in a variety of ways at Zearing Child Enrichment Center. A parents' involvement in their child's education is important; we want you to know what is happening in your child's classroom as well as the Center. Please make every effort to stay informed; you are your child's most important teacher and advocate.

Classroom Newsletter

The center provides a monthly newsletter from each classroom, which is posted in Brightwheel and posted on all parent communication boards in the center. These boards are located in each classroom and up front. They contain center information, interesting articles, area business activities, lesson plans, menus, and classroom information.

Classroom Parent Information Board

All classrooms have information boards that provide daily schedules, daily/weekly lesson plans, menus, and "What Happened Today". The Community Happenings Board located up front will provide information about what is happening within the community of Princeton IL.

Face-to-Face Interactions

Zearing Child Enrichment Center staff makes every effort to dialogue with families in a positive manner to plan strategies, resolve issues and provide assistance in a timely and effective manner. Please feel free to suggest ways that we can strengthen our partnership with you as together we seek to provide a high quality learning environment for everyone in our community.

Program Survey

Parents are invited to participate in an annual program evaluation/survey. This process allows the center to measure progress toward program goals and objectives. The results are used as a basis for continuing successful activities and for changing those areas that may need improvement.

Brightwheel Communication

Teachers use brightwheel for recording and tracking daily events and activities in the classroom and managing administrative tasks. As a parent, you'll get private, real-time updates on your child delivered to your mobile device throughout the day. Brightwheel is equipped with daily updates, photos, checking in, messaging, and a calendar. Brightwheel is frequently updating their app and adding new features.

Parent/Teacher Communications

Zearing Child Enrichment Center has a management team to assist with on-going communication and supervision at the center. This team includes: Director, Assistant Director, and our teachers. We can all assist with questions or concerns about the center.

Assessment Plan

For problem solving at the classroom level we recommend the following two-step process:

- First, bring any concern to your classroom teachers.
- Next, if you are not satisfied or still have a concern, schedule a meeting with the Center Director.

When a parent has a concern, we ask that they remember the following (see Appendix for the Solution and Resolution Worksheet):

- Teachers want parents to be satisfied with the care their child is receiving.
- Talk to the teachers directly whenever possible; if you would prefer, talk with the Center Director.
- Use the Solution/Resolution worksheet found in the Appendix of the Parent Handbook to facilitate verbal communication.
- Realize that if you have a concern with a teacher, that in order to deal with the issue in a straightforward manner, the Center Director will need to investigate first by talking with the teacher about your concern.
- Please give teachers a chance to correct minor issues.
- On the other hand, don't allow concerns to build up. As concerns occur, share them with the teachers. It is disturbing to find out "later" that a parent had a number of concerns and never expressed them.
- Sometimes we cannot make the changes you may request due to other restrictions, but we ALWAYS want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.
- If at any time a parent wishes to meet with their child's teacher to discuss issues that may arise, he/she can contact the teacher to schedule a meeting.

- We do ask that you schedule a conference with your child’s teacher to discuss issues in depth, and try not to discuss concerns during drop-off and pick-up times

Zearing Child Enrichment Center
Solution and Resolution Worksheet for Staff and Parents

Initiated by: ____ Parent/Guardian ____ Staff Member

Date Initiated: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Staff Member: _____

What is the issue?

How does the issue affect/involve you?

Who needs to be involved in solving/resolving the issue and the reason for their involvement?

Schedule a meeting; list the date and time:

During the Meeting: Brainstorm, with everyone present, ideas for solving/resolving the issue:

Describe the plan to be implemented:

List the action step(s) to be taken, the person responsible for the action step and the data set for the completion of the action step:

List the date and time for a follow up meeting:
