ACE Learning Center

The Ann Campbell Early Learning Center

Family Handbook

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About The Ann Campbell Early (ACE) Learning Center

Mission:
Ann Campbell Early Learning Center (ACE Learning Center) provides a high quality inclusive early learning environment that allows children to learn and explore through developmentally appropriate play activities through a partnership with our families and community members.

Vision:
Working together to help children reach their fullest potential.

Values:
Consistency within our program to support every child's development
High quality care to support our community
Individualized support to achieve goals
Lifelong Learners with commitment from all support systems
Dedicated, determined, and passionate about the work that we do

What is **The Ann Campbell Early (ACE) Learning Center?**

The Ann Campbell Early (ACE) Learning Center was established in 1983 by Dr. Ann Campbell and named Project Help (Helping Educate Little People). Dr. Campbell was a professor on the faculty of the Elementary and Special Education Department until she passed away in February 2011. In 2014, both MTSU and the Tennessee Board of Regents approved changing the name to honor Dr. Campbell's work and dedication to the University, community families, and early learning for children-especially those with special needs.

ACE Learning Center engages children (and families) in a variety of fun and exciting educational experiences. Programming and educational activities are based on the *Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards*, assessment data gathered about individual children, and recommended practices in inclusive early childhood education.

We believe families are an integral part of their child's development and our program. We strive to develop strong partnerships with the families and individuals working with and throughout the program. The purpose of this handbook is to provide details and information about the philosophy, policies, and procedures guiding the work of the ACE Learning Center. We welcome families to ask questions or raise concerns. We welcome active participation in the play and work of the Center.

We offer a comprehensive early learning environment:

- Providing inclusive, developmentally-appropriate classes for children ages 12 months to kindergarten age where young children learn and play together.
- Providing appropriate hands-on learning experiences for University students and others in the community.
- Funded through tuition, MTSU, the United Way of Rutherford & Cannon Counties, and private donations.

I. Curriculum Overview

The Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to meet the individual and group needs of the children in each classroom. The developmental assessment information gathered about each child is used to identify specific, individual goals and objectives to guide teachers in their work with the children. In addition, the *Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standard*s are used to guide teachers in targeting appropriate learning goals. Learning activities that are appropriate for all children are planned each day. Within all planned learning activities, individual children are guided and supported in order to engage them in meaningful learning opportunities. Through outside and other gross motor play, center activities, circle times, small group times, and meal times, children actively participate and learn from their interactions with materials, peers, and adults. Teachers plan small group times to provide specific learning opportunities for children so each child can achieve his/her individual goals and objectives.

The Department of Education requires that all programs serving children three and older include instruction in personal safety. This curriculum is provided at least one time per year and includes age-appropriate discussions about personal safety, including the prevention of child abuse. Parents have an opportunity to review the curriculum and must acknowledge that they were provided this opportunity. If parents have questions regarding the curriculum, they should talk with the teacher and/or director.

Child Guidance

The ACE Learning Center staff understands that young children are developing important social and emotional skills. They are committed to teaching children appropriate ways to interact with others and the environment, and communicate their needs and feelings. Children are respected. In order to facilitate healthy social and emotional development, a warm and nurturing environment is created. Routines with appropriate and reasonable limits are established. Adults model appropriate behavior and use positive words to tell children what they can do. When challenging behaviors exist, children are distracted, redirected, or provided logical and natural consequences. Children are given choices when possible and taught strategies to communicate their needs and desires. We do not use physical abuse, humiliation, or verbal abuse to discipline children.

The use of physical force or restraint is used only with a child for whom this practice is previously approved and is necessary to protect the safety of the child or the other children in the classroom. Only adults trained to use approved physical restraint practices can use them. The parent(s) will receive documentation each time physical restraint is used on their child.

When children exhibit severely challenging behaviors, teachers and parents develop a plan for addressing those behaviors. In this situation, the following steps will be followed in accordance with the Department of Education Child Care regulation requirements:

1. Teachers and parents will meet with Director to develop an action plan that best meets the needs of the child. The team will sign off on the plan and meet three weeks later to discuss progress.
2. Teachers will collect data to determine if strategies outlined in the plan are effectively addressing the issue. This information is shared with parents. Parents will inform staff of any changes that could cause a change in the child's behavior or any changes in the child's behavior at home.
3. At the date of action plan review, the team will go over the plan and make revisions based on collaborative input. If revisions are made, a follow-up meeting will be scheduled. If progress is being made, the plan will be continued.
4. If the issue is not resolved, and the child's behavior is affecting the safety and/or learning of the child or other children enrolled, the family and the ACE Director will discuss the availability of additional resources and/or identifying more appropriate settings to meet the needs of the child.

Assessment

ACE Learning Center gathers information about each child's development in order to provide appropriate activities and individual learning opportunities during the daily routines of each classroom. Information about your child's thinking and problem solving, motor, communication, social, and self-help skills will be gathered using strategies and tools that are age and developmentally appropriate. In addition, parents may be asked to provide information about their observations of their child and priorities they have for his/her continued growth and development. The information gathered about each child will be shared with his/her parents and only those involved in the daily activities of the classrooms.

There may be times in which a child's hearing, vision, communication, or other area of development will be screened by an outside resource (e.g., MTSU Department of Communication Disorders, Lions Club). Prior to those screenings, parents will be notified and provided with the option for the child to participate or not.

II. General Policies

Hours of Operation

ACE Learning Center is open from 7:30 to 5:00 Monday-Friday. Due to low numbers on Friday, the Fairview classroom combines with the Red Room classroom at the Baird Lane Center.

MTSU is a Tobacco-Free Campus and the use of tobacco will not be permitted.

Application and Enrollment

ACE Learning Center, as a department of Middle Tennessee State University, in its educational programs and activities involving students and employees, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age (as applicable), or status as a covered veteran or genetic information.

Application to the Ann Campbell Early Learning Center can be made online at http://www.mtsu.edu/acelearningcenter/apply.php. Once an application is received, the family is contacted to discuss availability of current openings and/or the need to put the child's name on the waiting list. Enrollment is determined based on the age of the child, the developmental needs of the child, and the date of application. Our goal is to balance each classroom with a group of children who can play and learn with each other as well as from each other. Siblings of currently enrolled children also are given priority when age-appropriate openings are available.

When an opening is available, the Director will contact the parents to inform them of the opening. If the parents are interested in the available classroom spot, a time will be scheduled for the parents to complete enrollment paperwork and observe the classroom. All forms must be completed prior to the child's first day of attendance. All parents wishing to enroll their child in the Center will pay a non-refundable enrollment fee of $50 at intake.

If parents wish for their child to attend the Center on a different schedule than originally registered, they should complete the Request Form. This form alerts the staff that a change is desired. The Director will review the request and determine if it can be granted based on current enrollment. If the parents' request cannot be granted immediately, the parents' request for change will be noted and will occur as soon as the enrollment allows. The parents will be notified of the decision by email, phone, or in person. Parents requesting a decrease in days must give written notice at least two weeks before the date of the schedule change. If a two weeks' notice is not given, ACE will bill at the originally agreed upon rate for two weeks from the date of notice.

Classroom Assignments

The ACE Learning Center offers classrooms at two locations: 206 N. Baird Lane and 820 Fairview Avenue, Room 120. A child's chronological age on August 15 is used to determine appropriate classroom assignment. The Green, Blue, and Red classrooms are located at Baird Lane and the Yellow Room is located at Fairview:

- **Green Room** for children ages 12 months-30 months. Adult to child ratios are 1:5; maximum group size is eight.
- **Blue Room** for children ages 24 months-3 years. Adult to child ratios are 1:5; maximum group size is nine.
- **Red Room** for children ages 3-4 years. Adults to child ratios are 1:7; maximum group size is 12.
- **Yellow Room** for children ages 4 years to kindergarten. The adult to child ratio is 1:8; maximum group size is 12.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

At drop off and pick up, parents are allowed to park in the breezeway at Baird Lane or outside the classroom door at the Yellow Room (on Fairview Avenue). Parking in these spaces should be limited to a brief walk into the building to sign the child in or out.

The person bringing the child to the Center must print his/her full name and write his/her signature beside the child's name and document the time the child has arrived in the sign-in book located at the front of the building. In addition, children must be logged into the electronic ProCare system.

The person picking up the child must print his/her name and write his/her signature and the time the child leaves in the sign-in book and log the child out of the ProCare system. Individuals picking up children should not sign out until they are ready to exit the Center with the child. Once a child is signed out, responsibility for the child belongs to the person who signs the child out.

Children nap daily between 11:30 AM-1:30PM. We ask families to avoid dropping off or picking up their child during this time. Families may contact ACE if there is an emergency and arrangements for pick up and drop off need to be made during this time.

Parking

If the person who drops off or picks up the child plans on being in the building for more time than to drop off or pick up the child, then the car should be parked in a designated area to avoid congestion in the drop off/pickup area.

Permission to Pick Up

Parents must provide a list of the people who are authorized to pickup their child from ACE Learning Center. Anyone picking up a child for the first time must show photo identification. If changes are needed on the Permission to Pickup information, parents should ask their classroom teacher or the secretary for a *Permission to Pickup* form to update this information.

We will not release a child to anyone who is not listed on the *Permission to Pickup* form unless the parent calls in advance to request it. Verification that this is a parent/custodial request requires the family to provide their building access code, which we have on file. Appropriate identification of person picking up the child is required.

Permission to Observe

ACE Learning Center has observation booths that are available to parents or legal guardians. The purpose of the booth is to provide a place in which parents can watch their own children as they participate in activities during the day. We also have University students who use the observation booths to complete course requirements. In an effort to protect the privacy of our children, we only allow students in the booth who have provided

documentation that the observation is required for a specific course. We ensure students know about confidentiality and appropriate behavior in the booth. Students are required to sign in and out when observing at ACE.

It is critical that anyone observing in the booth follow specific guidelines. This includes talking quietly with others and only discussing your child. Under no circumstances can observers video record their own child or any other child in the classroom.

We provide a *Permission to Observe* form for you to identify the names of anyone allowed to observe your child from the observation booth. We do not allow additional family members, caregivers, friends, or professionals to observe your child without your written permission. Request to edit the list can be made at any time.

Holidays and Closings

As a part of MTSU, when the University is closed, the Ann Campbell Early Learning Center is closed. Occasionally, ACE Learning Center extends the University holidays to provide opportunities for staff development, vacation time, planning, and center-wide activities. From time to time, there are occasions when the center is closed for unusual circumstances (e.g, health conditions throughout the building, death of a staff member, etc.). Parents will be notified of any unexpected closings prior to the closing. Be sure to check your phone for *Remind Text* notifications, or our website and Facebook page for the most up-to-date closure information. A calendar of openings and closures is provided at the time of enrollment, or on July 1 for the upcoming fiscal year.

Inclement Weather

The ACE Learning Center follows the University's policy regarding inclement weather. MTSU's General Guidelines for inclement weather are as follows:

> "When the Provost and Vice President for Business and Finance make the decision to close the campus or delay the start of classes, the regional media will be notified at least two hours prior to the standard 8:00 a.m. reporting time for staff and before the start of the earliest scheduled class. The announcement will apply to all classes, credit and non-credit, for the period affected; that is, morning, afternoon, or evening according to the specific scripts below. The MTSU web page will also carry a message regarding the status of classes and opening of offices. Offices at MTSU will be considered open unless the announcement specifically states that they will be closed." (http://www.mtsu.edu/policies/business-and-finance/IV-00-03.php)

On occasion, the ACE Learning Center may need to open late or close due to inclement weather that is not in line with the MTSU weather policy. Families should check their phones for *Remind Text* message alerts, or listen to the radio and/or television announcements regarding child care/University closings to know the intentions of ACE Learning Center's hours of operation. If the Center is open and families choose to keep their child at home, they should inform the Center.

Child Absences

When a child is unable to attend the program, the parent should notify the Center as soon as possible. In addition, parents are responsible for notifying the Center as soon as possible about any illness or disease their child has which may affect other children and staff.

Parents should keep their child at home if he/she exhibits any of these symptoms, which might indicate a contagious disease: fever of 100°or higher, unexplained or undiagnosed skin eruptions or rash, vomiting, excessive diarrhea, sore throat with swollen neck glands, or red eye conjunctivitis. The child needs to stay home for 24 hours after being fever free, all symptoms are gone, or cleared by their physician to return to the Center.

If at school and any of the above mentioned symptoms appear, the child will be moved to an area where other individuals will not be exposed, and parents will be contacted to pick up the child.

If a child is absent two consecutive days without any notification from the family, the Center will contact the parent/guardian.

Snacks and Lunch

Mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks are included in tuition fees. Snack menus are posted in each classroom. If the menu is changed, parents will be informed. If a child requires a special snack, the parent must inform the teacher or other staff person preferably before enrollment. Efforts will be made to meet special needs. However, in cases of extreme dietary requirements, parents will be required to furnish their child's snack. ACE Learning Center is a peanut-free facility. We ask that parents send in lunches that meet the following guidelines:

- 2 fruits/vegetables, 1 grain/bread, 1 protein (meat/meat alternative), and dairy. The best beverage choices are milk and water. The website http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html has information about appropriate serving sizes and food options.
- Avoid sending any foods in which sugar or corn syrup is the first ingredient. Our licensing agency considers foods with high sugar content and low nutritional value to be inappropriate. If foods of this nature are sent to school, they will be returned home unopened.
- We do not heat any foods. Consider the use of a thermos, insulated container, or ice pack to keep foods either warm or cold.
- Avoid sending foods that are considered choking hazards to children under five years of age. Some examples include: hot dogs (whole or cut into rounds), whole grapes or cherry tomatoes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels or chips, spoonful of almond butter, chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Meal time is an excellent time for children to practice many important life skills. We encourage the children to be as independent as appropriate during snacks and meals. Questions about your child's specific snack or meal time needs, or meeting the lunch guidelines should be discussed with the child's teacher or the Director.

Photographs and Videos

ACE Learning Center requests permission from all parents to use photographs of their children in posters, flyers, brochures, and other publications. We also participate in public awareness, promotional, or educational activities in which videos are needed to demonstrate the work of ACE Learning Center. Without permission, photographs or videos of children will not be used in this manner.

Parental Involvement

Parents of children enrolled in any ACE Learning Center classroom are encouraged to be active participants in the Center. We hope parents will readily share important information about their children on an ongoing and regular basis. Our classroom staff need to know children's interests, preferences, approaches to learning, and needs in order to support them effectively throughout the day. We encourage parents to join the ACE Parent Group that meets up to 4 times a year.

A monthly newsletter is emailed to all parents to let them know more about what is happening in each classroom and the Center as a whole. Classroom teachers report daily about each child's learning experience and behaviors such as interactions, meals, and toileting. Teachers send out a weekly email and Remind Text to parents letting them know about the week prior and the week ahead. Parent conferences are scheduled twice a year to discuss children's developmental progress and to identify goals for future learning. In addition, conversations between parents and teachers happen regularly. However, teachers are responsible for the

classroom children during drop off and pick up times, and are unable to fully engage with families for any lengthy conversations at these times. If you want to talk at length with the teacher during these times, please let us know and we can provide appropriate classroom coverage.

Other opportunities for family involvement occur throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to let staff know if they have a specific interest in supporting the Center or their child's classroom.

Additional Daily Needs

1. Each child must have a change of clothing with his/her name clearly marked on each clothing article and placed in a labeled bag to be left at the center for emergencies.

2. All children should be dressed for play. Their clothes should be washable and shoes suitable for vigorous activity. (Flip-flops and other open-toed shoes are not acceptable.) Outdoor play is an important part of our program. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure the child is dressed appropriately to play outside each day that the temperature is between 32°F and 95°F.

3. Parents are required to keep diapers or pull-ups and baby wipes supplied for their child. If working on toilet training, more than one change of clothes will likely be required.

4. ACE Learning Center provides nap cots/mats, crib sheets, and blanket covers. Any special naptime needs should be discussed with the teaching staff.

Grievance Policy

If the parent of a child attending ACE Learning Center is dissatisfied with any policy, procedure, or action of a staff member, he/she should request to meet and discuss concerns with the staff person most directly related to the concern. If the grievance or problem is not satisfactorily addressed, parents should contact the Director. A meeting of all parties may be scheduled to address the concern.

ACE Learning Center is committed to providing quality services and support to families. Efforts will be made to resolve issues in a manner that is agreeable to all parties. However, if a resolution cannot be achieved, the issue can be taken to the Director of Early Learning Programs for the College of Education.

III. Payments and Tuition Policies

Tuition is due monthly in advance of services. Each family will receive a billing statement for next month's services on or before the last Monday of the month. Monthly tuition is based on either four or five weeks of care. This is determined by the number of Mondays within the month. Tuition must be paid in full by the 5th of the month. Tuition paid after the 5th of the month will be charged a 5% late fee. Families will not be charged for the three weeks that the Learning Center is closed: one week in July and two weeks in December. For the months of July and December, ACE will prorate tuition based on the number of days that the Center is open. Credit will also be given when the family earns vacation time (see Paid Vacation time below). Families will be billed for the following University Holidays when ACE is closed: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday).

If a family has difficulty with making timely payments as described in previous paragraph, it is the family's responsibility to notify the Director to discuss the options for establishing a payment plan. If a family fails to make timely payments for 2 months in a row, or there are 3 late payments within a fiscal year, the child will not be allowed to return to the center until full payment is received or a plan to meet financial obligation for past

services, as well as a plan to make future payments, is agreed upon between the Director and the family. All past fees and tuition are due at time of exit as agreed upon at the beginning of placement. If a family leaves the program with no plan to pay any balance due, their name will be shared with MTSU Accounts Receivable and procedures for collecting will be implemented.

You may be eligible for financial assistance to pay for your child's care through the Tennessee Department of Human Services *Smart Steps* program. Click here for more information about eligibility.
https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/child-care-payment-assistance.html

The Director will contact the family to discuss unpaid tuition if the tuition has not been paid in full 2 months in a row, or 3 late payments within a fiscal year. Families are responsible for notifying the Director of any hardships or concerns about ability to pay this financial obligation.

Families with unpaid tuition 3 months in a row, or 4 late payments within a fiscal year, will meet with the ACE Learning Center Director to discuss more appropriate programs to meet the family's needs. All fees and tuition will be due at time of exit as agreed upon at the beginning of placement. The parent's name will be submitted to MTSU Accounts Receivable and procedures for collecting will be implemented.

Monthly Tuition

Schedules	Rates for months with 4 Mondays	Rates for Months with 5 Mondays
5 days per week - $180 per week	**$720**	**$900**
4 days per week - $143.75 per week	**$575**	**$718.75**
3 days per week - $110 per week	**$440**	**$550**
2 days per week - $80 per week	**$320**	**$440**

There will be a 15% discounted rate for any additional children within each family enrolled at the center. The discount is applied to the second child or to the child who attends fewer days and/or less time.

Late Pickup Fees

ACE Learning Center closes promptly at 5:00 p.m. If a child is not picked up by 5:00 PM, the parents are charged a late fee of $1.00 per minute late per child. At 5:10, this rate will go to $2 for every minute late per child. There will be no exceptions or warnings ensuring that this policy is applied consistently and fairly to everyone. We ask that you call us if you will be late and give us an approximate arrival time so that we can better comfort your child. After two late pickups of 10 or more minutes in a semester or three in a fiscal year, the Director will contact the parents for a conference. After three late pickups of 10 or more minutes in a semester or four late pickups in a fiscal year, the ACE Learning Center Director will meet with the family to discuss more appropriate programs to meet the family's work and child care schedule. Fees collected will be applied to purchases for classroom.

Paid Vacation Time

After the first month of enrollment, families will earn one week of vaction based on the number of days in attendance weekly. Vacation days may be taken without paying tuition fees. A Request Form will need to be submitted to ACE Learning Center at least two (2) weeks prior to the planned vacation. These days must be taken within the fiscal year (July 1-June 30) and will not be rolled over. Accounts must be paid in full before vacation time can be used.

Termination

A 2-weeks' written notice is required to terminate enrollment or two weeks' fees (from the date of notice) are assessed to the parent. If the parent fails to meet the obligation to pay the full amount of fees or provide the required notice as agreed upon at the beginning of the placement, the parent's name will be submitted to MTSU Accounts Receivable and procedures for collecting the fees will be implemented.

When a parent terminates his/her child's enrollment from ACE Learning Center, the slot will be filled as soon as possible. The parent may have his/her child's name put back on the Waiting List if he/she anticipates a time in the future when programming will again be appropriate.

IV. University Student Support and Research Policies

In order to better serve the needs of the children in the program and to support training and research at MTSU, ACE Learning Center provides hands-on training to MTSU, Motlow State Community College, and other students. These students are aware that ACE Learning Center is an inclusive early childhood program. They are observing and working in classrooms under the strict supervision of the teaching staff. All students spending time in a classroom are oriented to the program and informed of confidentiality and other classroom policies. If parents are concerned about a specific University student, they should inform the classroom teacher or the Director of the program.

From time to time, ACE Learning Center is asked to participate in research projects for MTSU faculty or their students. Each research opportunity will be considered individually in terms of benefits to the program, staff, and/or children. Prior to any child participating in research, parents will be provided information about the research opportunity and given the option for their child to participate or not. All research conducted at MTSU must be reviewed and approved by the MTSU Institutional Review Board, an entity supported by the MTSU Office of Compliance.

V. Privacy, Health, and Safety Policies

Privacy Practice

Federal law requires that ACE Learning Center keep facts about children's health, development, and education private. Private Health Information (PHI) means information about children's health, health services, and the kinds of services received from ACE Learning Center. When a child is enrolled in an ACE Learning Center program, certain facts are shared by parents. Examples of these facts include: name, birthdate, address, phone numbers, eligibility information for special services, individualized education/family plans, hospital stays, service plans, personal health information, notes or records from your child's doctor or therapists, lists of illnesses past and present, and lists of medicines currently taken or taken before being enrolled.

When parents enroll their child in the ACE Learning Center, they may complete one or more Release of Information forms for therapists, early intervention/public school programs, or other professionals who are involved with the child. We **CANNOT** share information about any child without the parents' or legal guardian's written consent. A parent/legal guardian may rescind their consent at any time by writing a letter stating that they do not wish for information to be shared with a specific person, agency, or program. If a child's personal information has already been shared with the parent's permission, we cannot take it back. Signed *Release of Information* forms must be updated annually.

Parents of enrolled children have the right to:

- ✓ See and get copies of the child's records.
- ✓ Ask us to change health information that is wrong. This should be done in writing.
- ✓ Ask us for a list of who received your child's health or educational information. Families must ask for this information in writing. Please know that by law we do not have to give you a list when you have signed the Release of Information forms.
- ✓ Ask us not to share certain facts about your child's health or education. This request must be made in writing and should outline the information that should not be shared and with whom.
- ✓ Rescind an authorization form, or Release of Information form. This must be made in writing.
- ✓ Ask for a new notice of our privacy practices and policies.

Parents may send their written request to the Center.

Medical Information

Prior to enrollment, a current signed Certificate of Immunization by the Tennessee Department of Health must be provided. In order to maintain enrollment, administration of immunizations must remain in accordance with the state requirements. As immunizations are received, the Tennessee Immunization Form must be updated and submitted to the ACE Learning Center.

Accident Reports

From time to time, children are involved in accidents or incidents while at the ACE Learning Center. When minor accidents occur, staff will attend to the child administering first aid if needed. An accident report will be completed outlining the description of the accident, nature of the injury, first aid administered, activity and people present when the accident occurred. Parents are notified about the accident by phone, note, Remind Text message, email, or in person, and will receive a copy of the accident report at the end of the school day. Staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid.

Liability

Every effort will be made to provide a safe and secure environment for the children. All children are closely supervised throughout the day. However, accidents can happen. MTSU provides liability insurance to cover any accidents that occur during the ACE hours of operation.

Administering Medicine

When possible, families should administer medications to their children prior to and after the school day. However, if a child must receive medication during the day, the following procedures must be followed by families and staff:

- All medications will be received by a management level staff member or the child's lead classroom teacher.
- Prescription medications must be stored in a prescription bottle. All other medications must be in their original container.
- No medication will be administered to a child by a member of the ACE staff without the following documentation. This documentation will be collected at the time of receiving the medication:

    - An ACE medication form, both signed and dated by the legal parent/guardian of the child and an ACE staff member giving permission to administer the medication. This will be placed in the child's file.
    - Specific directions for dosage and times to be administered must be on medication label. (Medication will never be administered in bottles or infant feeders unless authorized by a physician.)
- Most medications will be stored in a lockable cabinet when not in use. The medication will be placed in a Ziploc bag with the child's name, doctor's name, and doctor's phone number on it. The specific directions for administering the medication will be in the bag. Medication requiring refrigeration will be stored in a locked container with the documentation noted above. Medication requiring emergency administration, as directed by the physician, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant (e.g., "EpiPen", asthma inhaler) will be kept in an unlocked container that is inaccessible to children.
- Medications will be administered by the child's lead classroom teacher. If the lead teacher is unavailable, the child's classroom co-teacher will administer the medication.
- The following documentation will be kept by the ACE Learning Center staff each time the medication is administered:
    - The date and time of administration.
    - The name and signature of the staff member administering the medication.
    - Any noticeable side effects.
- The parent will verify documentation by staff with a signature at the end of the period of medication administration.
- Parents will verify by signature that they received the unused portion of the medication.

Seizures

From time to time, children who have seizures will be enrolled in an ACE Learning Center program. When this is the case, families must ensure that the classroom teachers receive specific details in writing and through conversation about the characteristics of the child's seizures, appropriate staff responses, and specific medication or medical responses. A specific response protocol should be provided by the child's physician and kept on file in the child's classroom. Should a seizure occur during the day, staff will call 911 if:

- The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes.
- There is one seizure after another without waking.
- The child is hurt during the seizure.
- The child has difficulty breathing or color turns blue.
- They do not know when the seizure started.
- The child has never had this type of seizure before.
- Staff administers prescribed medication to the child.

If the characteristics of the seizures, responses, or medications change, parents must notify the ACE Learning Center staff in writing.

Allergies/Asthma

If a child has allergies or asthma that requires a specific response, parents must inform the ACE Learning Center staff upon enrollment. If medication is needed, ACE Learning Center must have the medication labeled with the child's name and physician's name and phone number provided (see administering medication policy for specific procedures).

For children with food allergies and/or asthma, we must have an emergency protocol signed by the child's physician. BEFORE they can enter the classroom. In addition, parents must notify the ACE Learning Center if medication, treatment, or phone numbers change. If your child has severe food allergies or food protocol, ACE Learning Center reserves the right to ask the family to provide all food and beverages for their child while he/she is at the Center.

Medical Emergencies

If a child should have a medical emergency while at the ACE Learning Center, staff will call 911. Emergency transportation will transport the child to St. Thomas Rutherford Hospital. Parents will be notified as soon as possible after the emergency occurs. If the parent cannot be reached, other persons listed as emergency contacts will be called. If no one can be reached, the child's physician will be called. Parents must ensure all forms are up-to-date in case of changes in phone numbers or other emergency contact information.

Fire and Natural Disaster Emergencies

Specific safety procedures are in place in the event of a fire or a natural disaster. Fire drills are completed monthly. Tornado drills occur regularly. During a fire, children are moved to the farthest areas of the playgrounds for both sites. In case of a tornado, children are moved to safe inner locations in each of our sites. The safety of the children is our first priority. Children will not be released during a safety drill or when under a tornado warning or any other emergency requiring lock-down. Families receive a note at the end of the day if any drills or actual emergencies requiring lock-down occurred that day.

Emergency Situations

The MTSU Campus Police or Murfreesboro City Police will contact us in the event that there is a potential threat to the safety and welfare of the children and staff. Specific procedures are followed in these situations.

1) If the children are in their classroom, the teacher will lock the classroom doors, both front and back, while the teacher assistant and/or MTSU students calmly move the children to an area of safety within the classroom. The Center will remain in the lock-down state until given official notice that the threat to children's safety is gone.
2) If the children are on the playground, the teacher and teacher assistant will calmly move the children into the classroom farthest away from the threat, locking each door behind them and ensuring that the classroom door is locked as well. The Center will remain in the lock-down state until given official notice that the danger has passed.
3) During this time, the Director will be in contact with the appropriate authorities regarding the situation.
4) When the threat of danger has been cleared, families and staff will be allowed to enter and exit the building.
5) If appropriate, families may be contacted and asked to remove children as soon as the immediate danger has ended.
6) Parents will be notified at pick up on the day of the potential threat.

Procedures for Child Abuse Investigations

Individuals providing support to young children have a legal obligation to report cases of suspected child abuse. Parents also have an obligation to report such suspicions. Tennessee state law says that the person suspecting the abuse must report it. Reports of suspected abuse can be made to the Department of Children's Services (615-217-8900) or to the Tennessee Abuse Hotline (1-800-237-0004). Once a call is made, an investigation will follow. At ACE Learning Center, we require background checks for all employees and University students spending extended time in the classroom. All other individuals who spend time in the classroom are not left alone with children. Our first priority is creating a safe environment for all children.

VI. Service Providers and Therapists

Ann Campbell Early (ACE) Learning Center welcomes individual therapists to the Center and strives to support children to meet the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals set by the family and others during the IFSP meeting. As an early learning center, we recognize the importance of the early years and support laying the foundation to provide the best learning environment to encourage optimal development. We value the input of therapists and recognize the importance of working together to maximize each child's learning opportunities.

ACE works closely with the MTSU Home and Community-Based Early Intervention program and follows the same philosophy regarding serving children in their natural environment and teaching through natural routines. While at ACE, the natural routines include the activities and events that occur throughout the day including large and small group activities, meal times, outside play, and naps.

In order to support this philosophy, ACE Learning Center requires the delivery of therapy to occur during and within the natural routines of the classroom and with the use of our resources and materials. Our teachers want to learn from therapists in order to provide ongoing opportunities for the child to practice, and eventually master, a skill or task throughout the week when the therapist is not there. The staff at ACE will gladly work with the therapist to provide access to resources or materials available at the center.

If the therapy provided is not conducive to being taught in the natural routine of the day, the family and therapist should consider alternate locations for the therapy session. ACE Learning Center is not designed to provide space for individual therapy sessions.

We look forward to working with the therapists who support the children who attend our center. Together we can make therapy visits successful for the child as well as the teacher and other children in the classroom.

Additional resources to support children's learning in natural environments and the integration of support services in the natural environment are listed as follows:

Natural Environments/Routines
http://www.eiexcellence.org/evidence-based-practices/natural-environments/

Workgroup on Principles and Practices in Natural Environments
http://www.nectac.org/~pdfs/topics/families/Principles_LooksLike_DoesntLookLike3_11_08.pdf