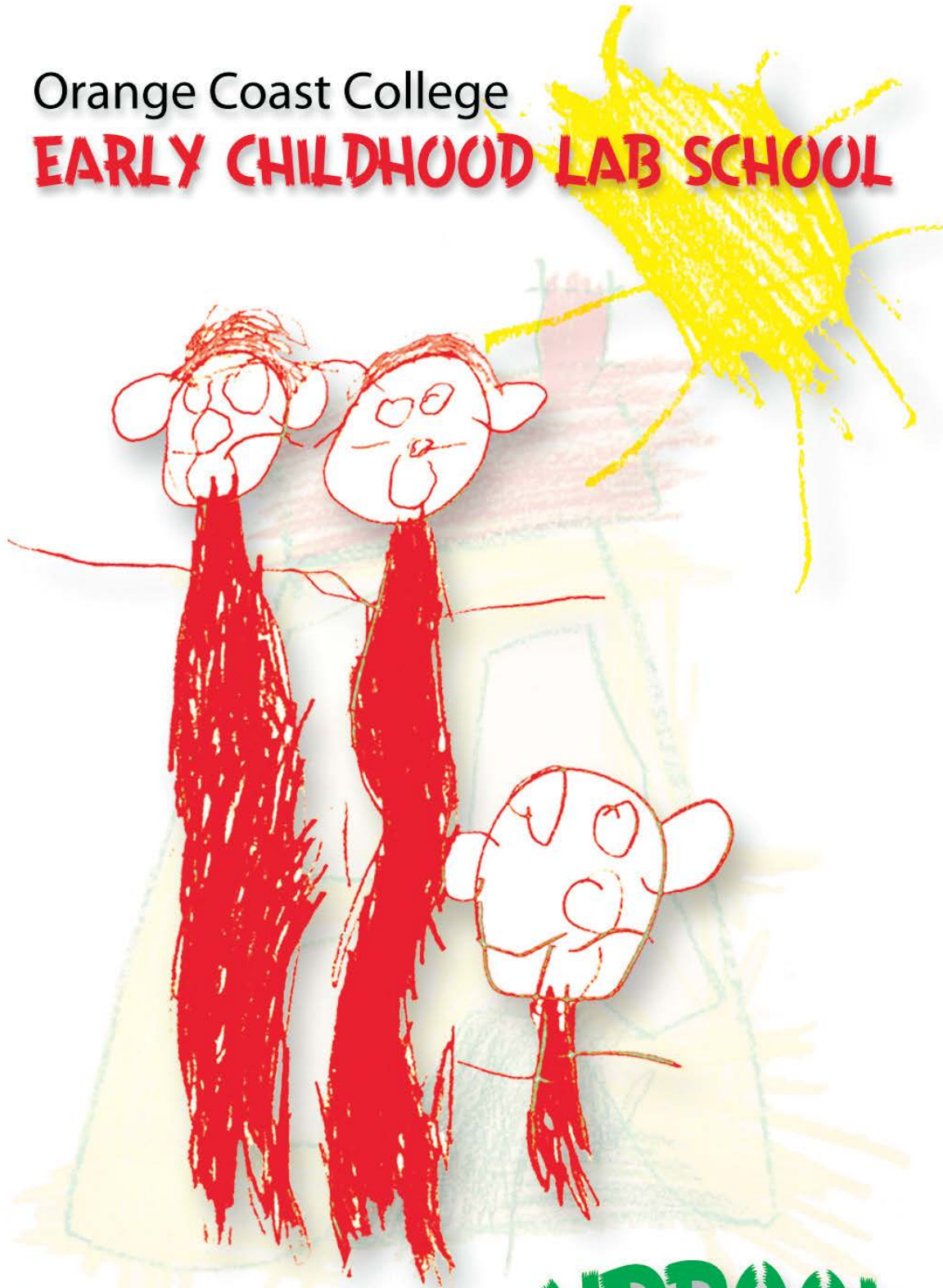


Orange Coast College

**EARLY CHILDHOOD LAB SCHOOL**



**PARENT HANDBOOK**

# Orange Coast College Early Childhood Lab School

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Orange Coast College (OCC) Early Childhood Lab School. Our staff strives to work closely with you to provide a nurturing, stimulating environment that extends and enriches your child(ren)'s early home experiences. We welcome your ideas and creativity in helping us to maintain a high-quality program for your child(ren). This handbook has been developed to answer most of the questions you may have regarding our program and policies. Please keep it in a convenient place for easy reference. Again, welcome! We look forward to serving the needs of you and your family.

## Purpose

The Early Childhood Lab School works in conjunction with the Early Childhood Education Department at OCC. The Lab School is a teacher training site and demonstration setting for college students enrolled in Field Experience and Practicum courses. Through the study of child development theories, and unique hands on training experiences, college students immerse themselves into the learning environment and become prepared to teach young children. The curriculum is designed to stimulate and foster development of the whole child including social-emotional development, cognitive thinking, physical development, language and literacy skills, creativity and innovation. In order to maintain success within the lab school, staff and faculty work together to ensure that quality practices are implemented in all learning environments.

## Philosophy

The individual needs and interests of the children form the basis for determining the design of the play space and curriculum development. Children are able to choose freely from a wide range of play and learning experiences. The fostering of curiosity, problem solving, and creative exploration of quality materials provides a foundation for cognitive development. The program emphasizes the development of strong self-esteem, feelings of independence and competence, and sensitivity to others.

## Curriculum and Documentation of Learning Activities

Our curriculum is designed to nurture young children's whole development. This includes stimulating their language, physical, cognitive, and creative development, as well as encouraging positive self-esteem and social interaction. The curriculum is designed to meet the individual needs and interests of the children, emphasizing the building of autonomy, problem-solving abilities, self-awareness and sensitivity to others in the following areas: music and movement, language and literacy, math, anti-bias goals, physical development, creative art, dramatic play, and physical and natural science.

We seek to foster children's concepts of self-identity and confidence, while learning to build comfortable, empathetic relationships with others. We strive to create a cooperative school community where diverse ideas, beliefs, and cultures are valued and appreciated. With the support of their teachers, children learn to express their needs and feelings, and to listen to the needs and feelings of others. Children's social, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills are

developed by fostering critical thinking about what's fair to themselves and others, as well as learning to formulate mutually positive solutions.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to document individual learning and classroom activities including observations, work samples, assessment checklists, and photos of class activities. Individualized information is collected in children's portfolios for discussion at parent-teacher conferences.

## California Preschool Learning Foundations

The California Preschool Learning Foundations describe the knowledge and skills preschool aged children typically learn with the appropriate support and guidance of teachers and through child-initiated play. The Learning Foundations describe development of young children within all developmental domains which include: Social-Emotional Development, Science, History-Social Science, Health, Physical Development, Visual and Performing Arts, Mathematics, English-Language Development, and Language and Literacy. Teaching staff and the ECE college students, utilize the California Preschool Learning Foundations to support evidence of learning. The California Preschool Learning Foundations can be found at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

## Messy Play

The Early Childhood Lab School is committed to supporting the importance of messy play in all learning environments. Messy play (e.g., sand, water, mud, clay molding, play dough, glue, paint, etc.) is an integral part of the children's learning environment. Messy play provides the opportunity for hands on learning experiences. By engaging in messy play, children learn how to explore, investigate, discover, express creativity and experiment. In addition, messy play supports children's sensory development, tactile learning, strengthening their hand eye coordination and motor skills. Messy play also inspires learning about different materials and properties, which stimulates curiosity.

All activities are supervised by the Early Childhood Lab school staff to ensure the health and safety of each child. Children will be exposed to messy materials; therefore, it is inevitable that children may get dirty or get materials on their clothing. Please ensure that children have an extra set of clothes in their bags, should they need to be changed during the day.

## Parent Involvement and Communication

The partnership of parents and staff is a vital part of our program. We encourage you to visit, observe, share ideas and suggestions, and maintain open communication with our staff. Please keep the staff aware of changes in your child's home life to help ensure that we have the information needed to meet your child's unique and changing needs. The administrative team regularly sends all school communication via email. If you are concerned that you are not receiving email communication, please reach out to us. We will confirm that we have the correct email address on file.

The teaching teams communicate with families through classroom specific Shutterfly share accounts. Teachers will post classroom pictures, activities, and resources to families through

this account. If you encounter any problems with accessing Shutterfly, please send your child(ren)'s teacher an email so that they can ensure you are able to access the materials.

\*Families may observe the classrooms through our one-way observation room mirrors at any time. Our sound system enables you to listen to the activities in each classroom. Please respect the confidentiality of children enrolled, and refrain from conversing about other children's behavior or development while in observation areas.

**\*COVID-19 Note: To limit the number of adults entering the facility, the observation rooms are closed until further notice.**

## Parent Conferences

You will have the opportunity to communicate more formally with your child(ren)'s teacher at scheduled conferences in January. The Lab School staff will send conference information near the end of the Fall semester. If you would like to schedule a conference, please submit the conference request survey. Your child's teachers will meet with you to discuss your child's progress and needs, as well as share his/her portfolio with you.

If you need to meet with your child's teachers at another time, to discuss questions or concerns, please let us know. While we cannot discuss issues in depth during drop off or pick up, we do want to communicate openly with you. Teachers have specific times set aside for phone calls and email responses. Phone conferences and special meetings may be arranged by request.

## Parent Volunteers

Parent classroom involvement is welcomed at the Lab School but opportunities must be scheduled in advance. Please let the teachers and admin staff know if you would like to participate in the classroom. We are happy to discuss the specifics and schedule a time that will be mutually convenient. All volunteers, including parents, are required to complete the Lab School Volunteer packet, which includes submission of their DTaP, MMR, TB and Influenza records.

## Parenteers

Parenteers is a parent volunteer group that supports in planning Lab School family activities and fundraisers. Parenteer events are planned in collaboration with the Lab School team. The Lab School staff will reach out with specific details at the beginning of the academic year. However, feel free to reach out throughout the year if you are interested in participating.

**\*COVID-19 Note: Parental classroom involvement and volunteer opportunities are postponed until further notice.**

## Staff

The Lab School is an integral part of the Early Childhood Department. The director, coordinator, mentor teachers, and co-teachers in the program have been selected because they have an especially strong background of coursework and experience in Early Childhood Education. They exhibit a standard of positive adult-child interaction for students to model, and from which parents may draw support.

The Lab School carries membership with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and its state and local affiliates. Regularly scheduled staff meetings and professional development activities encourage staff members to continually increase their knowledge of developmentally appropriate teaching practices, so that they may better serve your children.

\*In addition to paid staff, the program is also supported by students enrolled in early childhood practicum and field experience courses. Beginning-level student teachers are scheduled once a week, and advanced-level student teachers twice a week. Student teachers are always under the supervision of our staff and are never left alone with the children. In addition, we sometimes have students enrolled in child development classes who observe and record children's behavior through our observation rooms.

**\*COVID-19 Note: The Lab School will not be hosting student teachers or observation students until further notice.**

## Enrollment & Requests for Schedule Changes

Upon enrollment, an offer letter is provided indicating your child(ren)'s schedule of attendance and classroom placement. Each child's schedule of attendance (i.e., MWF, TTH, or M-F) is guaranteed for the upcoming academic year. To maintain consistency for children, schedule changes mid academic year will be limited and addressed on a case by case basis. Families interested in making a schedule change for subsequent academic years, are able to make their requests in the month of January. Requests for schedule changes will be accommodated based on classroom availability and your family's original Wait List date.

## Supporting Children with Special Needs

The Early Childhood Lab School may enroll children with disabilities if it is determined that: the program is appropriate for the child, the staff is able to meet the individual needs of the child, and the child is developed to the extent that he/she is not a hazard to him/herself and does not endanger the well-being of the staff and other children enrolled in the program. The Early Childhood Lab School staff will do their best to provide appropriate support that is within our means, striving for each child to be successful in the preschool environment.

If a child is currently attending the Lab School, and there is a cause for concern or it is suspected that a child may have a delay within their development, a meeting will be scheduled with the family, the teacher, and the director. Together, a plan will be developed which may include: referrals for specialist evaluation, individual adaptations in the classroom environment, further

observations, follow-up meetings and collaborative goal-setting to ensure the child's needs can be met appropriately within the limits of the program.

If specialized services are recommended or a referral is made for child observation, parents may be asked to sign the Lab School's Authorization for Release and Exchange of Student Records form. This form grants permission for our staff to communicate with individuals providing services/assessments to children enrolled at the Lab School. Signed waivers will also allow the Early Childhood Lab School to share copies of assessments, Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P) if applicable, and other information as appropriate. Our goal will continuously be to promote support services required or recommended for the development of the child.

## Tuition

The Lab School is entirely self-supporting and depends upon tuition for its operation. Tuition is assessed on a yearly basis and divided into ten equal monthly payments. In order to sustain cost of living increases and salaries, the Lab School will be required to increase tuition costs as appropriate. Notification will be provided to families of tuition increases prior to the beginning of the new academic year.

The first tuition payment is due with the enrollment registration fee, and both are non-refundable and non-transferrable payments. The final payment is due May 25<sup>th</sup>. \*Tuition may be paid by check, money order, or credit card. The Lab School accepts all major credit cards, except for American Express. If tuition is paid after the last business day of the month, a \$15 late fee will be assessed. The college will assess a \$25 service charge for returned checks. In order to ensure the quality operation of our program, no tuition credit will be given for any of the holidays the school is closed, or for any other absence during your child's enrollment. One-month advance notice (in writing) must be given if your child is being withdrawn from the program.

**\*COVID-19 Note: The Lab School office is closed for visitors at this time. Credit card payments will primarily be completed via phone.**

## Photography and Multimedia

Children enrolled at the Lab School may be photographed, video and audio-recorded during normal business hours, field trips, special events and activities. A consent form covering all possible uses of multimedia is included in the registration packet. Please ensure that you have completed this form and that you update as needed.

## Calendar/School Hours

The Lab School generally follows the Orange Coast College academic calendar. The fall semester typically begins in late August, and runs through mid-December. Spring semester begins in mid-January and runs through early June.

Regular school hours are from 9:00 – 11:30 AM, Monday through Friday. Schedules of attendance may vary from two, three or five days a week. A calendar for the academic year will



be sent home to parents during the summer months along with other informational forms. The calendar will include holidays, tuition payment due dates, Lab School special events, and dates the Lab School will be closed.

## Lunch Bunch

Preschool & Pre-K children have the option of attending Lunch Bunch for an additional daily fee. Hours are: 11:30 A.M. – 12:40 PM. Registration is available in advance on a first-come, first-served basis. The fee for Lunch Bunch is payable at the time of reservation and is not refundable. Children enrolled in Lunch Bunch are required to bring a packed lunch from home. Please label lunch boxes. Due to limited space, we are unable to heat or refrigerate any foods. To ensure the safety of all children, no child will be accepted or dismissed while the office is closed for lunch between 12:00 - 12:40 PM.

## Extended Day

Preschool and Pre-K children, who are potty trained, have the option of attending Extended Day for an additional monthly fee. Registration involves a semester commitment. The first payment is non-refundable and early withdrawal requires full payment for the remainder of the semester. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis due to a limited number of spaces. The extended day schedule is from 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM.

## Summer Program

The Lab School offers a summer program during the month of June. The program is held Monday-Friday from 9 AM - 1 PM. Children must be completely potty trained by the time of registration. For registration information and tuition rates, contact the Lab School office.

## What to Bring/What to Wear

Each child has an assigned cubby for his/her personal belongings. Backpacks should have a complete change of clothes. \*Children are welcome to bring small comfort items that will ease their transition from home to school. Larger items and toys should be left at home.

**\*COVID-19 Note: We ask that children do not bring comfort items to the classroom (e.g., pacifiers, lovies, stuffed animals, etc.).**

Please label all items that your child(ren) brings to school including: water bottles, clothes, backpacks and lunchboxes. Please send your child to school wearing comfortable play clothes. Remember that your child will be involved in painting, water play, and other messy play experiences. Jeans, shorts, and old T-shirts are very appropriate for our program.

## Arrival and Departure

**\*In alignment with our COVID-19 Health & Safety plan, arrival and departures to school will occur at your child's designated entrance. See COVID-19 Section of Handbook.**

Please bring your child directly to his/her classroom and pick your child up immediately after the session ends. Teachers need the time before class and between sessions for curriculum planning, mentoring student teachers, and other duties.

Please sign your child in and out each day on the clipboard near the classroom entrance. Bring your child all the way into the classroom and help him/her to relax and feel comfortable. A warm greeting from the teacher and a big hug from you will be a nice beginning to your child's day.

Children will only be released to their parents or to other adults previously authorized in writing. A picture ID will be required of all adults. Please keep personal information and release authorization current.

It is important that you arrive on time each day to pick-up your child. Children become stressed when no one arrives for them at the end of the school day. If you will be late due to an emergency, please call the Lab School to let us know you are on your way. If your child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the session's end, our staff will contact any authorized adult on your emergency list to pick up your child.

## Attendance

The Early Childhood Lab School recognizes the importance of consistent attendance among children enrolled in the program. Children who arrive late or who are continuously absent, may miss out on essential opportunities in the classroom, and interrupt the classroom routine. Regular attendance in the preschool program supports children in adapting to separation anxiety and transitions as well. In addition, regular attendance supports children in building a strong foundation in their social emotional development and strengthens relationships among peers and staff.

Please notify the Lab School office if your child will be absent for the day or an extended period of time. You can email the Lab School staff at: [earlychildhoodlabschool@occ.cccd.edu](mailto:earlychildhoodlabschool@occ.cccd.edu) or call us at 714-432-5517 or 714-432-5635.

## Snack & Lunch

To encourage, physical distancing and healthy hygiene habits, the Lab School will serve snacks packed from or pre-packaged Lab School snack. See the items below for more information.

1. **Water Bottles:** Please pack a labeled water bottle for your child each day. The Lab School will have water stations available for water bottles to be refilled throughout the day.
2. **Daily Snack Options:**
  - a. **Packed Snacks from Home**
    - i. The Lab School encourages families to pack an easily accessible snack for their child(ren) each day.
    - ii. The Lab School will provide a labeled, clear container for your child(ren) to store their snack and/or lunch box for the day.

- iii. We ask that families clearly label/identify their child(ren)'s snack so that your child is able to easily identify and grab their snack from the container.
- iv. Our experience shows that when children bring snacks from home:
  - 1. The process is more hygienic for children and staff.
  - 2. Children prefer to eat snacks from home and that are familiar to them.
- b. Pre-packaged Lab School Snack**
  - i. The Lab School will have pre-packaged snacks available as an option for families.
  - ii. Snack for the week is subject to change, based on available supplies.
  - iii. Examples of individually wrapped snacks provided by the Lab School may include but are not limited to: Pre-packaged pretzels and crackers, fruit cups (light syrup), nut free granola bars, seaweed, individually packaged cheese sticks, sliced fruit and veggies.
- c. Nut Free Center**
  - i. As a reminder, the EC Lab School is a 100% Nut Free center. If you plan to pack food for your child(ren), please make sure that the snack does not include: peanuts, almonds, cashews, pecans, nut butters, etc. For families looking for a school approved alternative to nut butters, we often recommend sunflower butter. In order to ensure a healthy and safe environment for all children, we request that no peanut products be brought to school.
- d. Nutritional Needs & Allergies:**
  - i. Parents of children that have food sensitivities or special nutrition needs should see the director and notify their child's teacher.

## Birthdays and other Celebrations

### 1. Birthdays

- a. Each classroom will celebrate children's birthdays during class time. Celebrations include songs, chants, and birthday crowns for children to wear.
- b. The Lab School will also provide a birthday snack on a scheduled day of each month (See Lab School Calendar for specific dates). The snack will be available to all children in celebration of that month's birthdays. Birthday treats will include, but are not limited to popsicles, GoGurts, animal crackers, etc.

### 2. Special Celebrations

- a. Other celebrations are planned that support our school philosophy and anti-bias goals. Children and teachers may plan class parties to celebrate the end of the semester, or to culminate a specific learning project within the curriculum.
- b. The Lab School will provide pre-packaged snacks for classroom celebrations (e.g., Winter snack, Harvest snack, Valentine's Day, etc.)

3. The Lab Schools hosts several all-school celebrations throughout the year (e.g., Friendship Lunch, Family Day, End of Year Picnic, etc.). Information about special events and RSVP information will be sent out via email and posted at classroom entrances.

**\*COVID-19 Note: All school, in person gatherings will be postponed until further notice.**

## Child Illness Policy-Health and Safety

At the Lab School, we strive to limit the spread of illness and common childhood communicable diseases in our center. We are committed to implementing policies that respect the needs of children, families, and staff during times of illness. It is important to verify that your child's health is adequate for participation in program activities before bringing him/her to school. A child who is not feeling well will not enjoy the school day and may possibly infect other children. If your child becomes ill while at the school, we will notify you immediately. If you are not available, we will call someone else on your emergency list.

In order to prevent and control the spread of germs and illnesses, children should be symptom free from illnesses such as, but not limited to: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, earache, sore throat. Children should be symptom free for 24 hours, without the administration of any preventive medications, before returning to school.

### **Required Immunizations:**

The Lab School adheres to the California Department of Public Health regulations for [children's immunizations](#). Children must receive the required immunizations and prior to enrollment in the Lab School. Immunizations must be kept current throughout your child's enrollment in our program. If a child requires a temporary or permanent medical exemption for a vaccination, families must submit yearly documentation of the exemption from your child's physician. A preadmission health evaluation, from a licensed physician, must be submitted within thirty days of your child's first day of school. The evaluation must document a physical examination completed no more than one year prior to your child's entrance to the program.

### **Contagious Conditions:**

Children with contagious conditions that include, but are not limited to, conjunctivitis, impetigo, ringworm, hand-foot-mouth, rash, lice etc., must be seen by a physician and/or treated with appropriate medication before returning to school. Certain conditions may require a physician's note in order to return to school.

### **Common Cold**

Children with symptoms associated with a common cold such as continuous nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, decreased appetite, and ear infections should stay at home until symptoms disappear or are determined by a physician to be non-contagious (e.g., allergies).

### **Health Check**

As children arrive to school, they will undergo a health check. The health check will include a temperature check upon arrival. Staff will utilize a no touch thermometer for this process.

Children's temperature must not exceed 100 degrees. If a child's temperature is higher than 100 degrees, they will not be allowed to stay at school.

Another component to the health check will consist of daily questions related to your child and family's health. The following questions will be asked to the person signing in your child(ren):

1. Do you live with anyone or have you had close contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 14 days?
2. Do you or anyone in your household have a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath?
3. Do you or anyone in your household have chills, loss of taste or smell, vomiting and/or diarrhea?
4. Do you or your child(ren) have any other signs of communicable illness such as a cold or flu?
5. Has your child received any fever reducing medications in the past 24 hours (e.g., Tylenol or Motrin)?

If during the health check, a child is exhibiting symptoms including, but not limited to: watery eyes, continuous runny noses, sores or lesions, rashes, etc., they will not be admitted to school for the day. Mild illnesses are common among children, and infections often spread before the onset of any symptoms. Exclusion from the Lab School may be necessary to reduce the transmission of illness.

## First Aid

Our staff is trained in basic First Aid and Pediatric/Adult CPR. We will administer minor treatment as needed. Parents are notified in writing of any injury. A copy of the written notice will be placed in your child's file.

Parents will be notified immediately if the injury requires more than a simple first aid procedure.

## Medication

If there is a medication that your child may need during school hours, please adhere to the following guidelines.

1. Request and complete the LIC 9221 form (Parental Consent for Administration of Medications).
2. Bring the medication to the Lab School administrative team. The medication must be in its original container and accompanied by a copy of the doctor's prescription.
3. Medications will be stored in the office, in a central and secure location

## Emergency Preparedness

The Lab School has developed a comprehensive emergency response plan in conjunction with the college. This plan includes on site emergency and first aid supplies, a 3-day supply of food and water and the practicing of fire, earthquake and lockdown drills. Drills are practiced

monthly alternating between the three types of drills. When leaving the building for emergency purposes, the Lab School office will take our emergency notebook with special contact information.

At the beginning of each school year, we request that parents supply an emergency packet for their child, including a change of clothes and a personal note/photo for their child. The emergency packet is in addition to, the daily change of clothes packed in your child(ren)'s bag.

## COVID-19

The Early Childhood Lab School has taken enhanced health and safety measures for your family, child(ren), and Lab School staff. It is imperative that all families adhere to the safety protocols outlined in the Early Childhood's Health and Safety guidelines in order to maintain health and wellness within our facility.

An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable. By attending the Early Childhood Lab School, you understand all risks related to exposure to COVID-19.

All Coast Community College District employees, visitors and students will be required to follow COVID-19 Safe Practices for the OCC Early Childhood Lab School. The COVID-19 Safety Plan is inclusive of 5 sections: (1) Physical Distancing (2) Personal Hygiene (3) Protective Equipment (4) Environmental Cleaning and (5) Medical Screening. Copies of the COVID-19 Safety Plan are available upon request.

It is a priority of the Lab School to maintain communication with families regarding policies, procedures and practices for Lab School operations. We recognize that the health crisis is fluid and we are committed to ongoing communication that will support young children and families with transitions, in accordance to guidelines provided by local and state agencies.

Arrival and pick up procedures will include staggered times and health screenings (See School Information Packet). Classroom group size and staffing (adult to child ratios) may be altered as required, in order to meet title 22 state licensing regulations or by guidance provided by other local and state agencies such as, but not limited to, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In addition, recommendations for adaptations to classroom space and physical distancing will be adhered to, for the safety and well-being of staff and children. These adaptations will be put into place, while still allowing for children to learn in a nurturing and responsive environment.

The Early Childhood Lab School will align with the: CDC Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs, Coast Community College District, California Department of Health and Department of Social Services California State Licensing (Title 22

Regulations) reporting process for COVID-19. It is required that parents report any of the following:

- Your family has been exposed to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.
- You or someone you have had close contact with is or was infected with COVID-19.
- You, your child, or someone you have been exposed too is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms including but not limited to 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.
- You or your child has contracted COVID-19 and tested positive.

For additional information regarding our COVID-19 policies, please reference the COVID-19 Family Packet.

### Private Child Care (Babysitting) Agreement

The primary commitment of the Lab School staff is to provide high quality learning experiences for children during normal business operations. However, we understand that parents may establish relationships and trust with teachers at the Lab School and may inquire about babysitting services.

The Early Childhood Lab School does not recommend or refer any staff member for babysitting purposes. A private child care agreement must be made directly between the staff member and the family. The Lab School will not be involved in any way with this agreement. Further, it is requested that private arrangements be made outside of the staff members working hours at the Lab School.

The Lab School follows a recruitment and hiring process to ensure we are employing teachers who meet the standards required for the position. Staff must adhere to standards of work and behavior on Lab School grounds. The Lab School does not endorse our employees in any regard to be suitable for babysitting services. We have no control over the conduct of staff outside of their position at the Lab School. It is suggested that parents make their own checks as to the suitability of a staff member to ensure they are meeting the needs of the family.