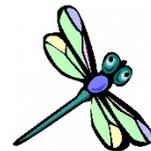


The Early Learning Centers of Phenix City Schools

Parent Handbook

2020-2021



Phenix City Early Learning (PCELC)	Creekside Early Learning (CELC)
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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the *Early Learning Center* in Phenix City Schools! This year promises to be one filled with exciting learning opportunities for our students and families.

This handbook will ensure that you understand our school policies, procedures, and state requirements. Use it as a quick reference to answer your questions throughout the school year.

We want every child to have a memorable year in "real" school, and we need your help. The teachers and staff of the Early Learning Centers work passionately to create an environment that is safe, loving and conducive to learning. It is our goal to increase each student's self-confidence and self-regulation, as well as maximize their cognitive abilities.

Let us know how we can be of service to your family!

Dr. Julie Norden
Director of Preschool Services

Phenix City School District Vision

Pursuing excellence on behalf of every student in every school!

District Mission

In collaboration with families and community members who are personally committed to the success of each student, Phenix City Schools strives to become a premier school system. Staff members effectively engage students and inspire their emotional, ethical, intellectual, physical, and social development. Through an inquiry-based teaching approach and utilization of innovative practices to foster student ownership of learning, these empowered students will possess the ability to adapt in an ever-changing world and will become responsible and productive citizens who positively impact society.

Early Learning Motto

Play, learn, and grow together

#1000BooksBeforeKindergarten

Early Learning Beliefs

1. Student development is fostered through family involvement.
2. Our *school family* has access to a safe, nurturing, inviting, respectful, and stimulating learning environment in order to thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.
3. Students have access to a highly qualified, dedicated, and open-minded staff.
4. Children learn best through meaningful play that promotes social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth.
5. *Authentic learning*, through a variety of curricular resources, encourages inquiry, problem solving, creativity, independence and cooperation in children.
6. The staff supports all children in developing strong values that reflect empathy, respect, service, and integrity.
7. Students gain knowledge and skills, such as confidence, through active learning, collaboration, and meaningful experiences.

Early Learning Core Values

Respect	Persistence	Confidence
Integrity	Service	Community
Kindness	Curiosity	Authentic Learning



Hours

Official School Day: 7:35 AM-2:05 PM

Student Arrival Times: 7:20 AM-7:35 AM

Student Departure Times: 2:05-2:20 PM

Optional After-Care Program Hours: 2:20 AM-5:45 PM

Office Hours: 7:20 AM-3:20 PM

Departure and Arrival

Good attendance is critical for your child's success in school. Everyday counts!

- Arrive between 7:20 AM-7:35 AM. If you arrive early, please remain in your vehicle until 7:20 AM.
- For safety, all students must exit their vehicles on the driver's side.
- Students will eat breakfast at 7:35 AM as a whole class. Late arrivers may miss breakfast.
- Pick up students between 2:05 PM-2:20 PM.
- **A \$12.00 late fee will be charged to parents for afternoon pick-up after 2:20 PM.** Repeat offenses may result in a mandatory meeting with the principal or director. Failure to follow the program's guidelines may result in removal from the Pre-K Program.
- During dismissal, stand by your vehicle, hold up the laminated number, and load your child into an **appropriate safety car seat** required by law.
- For safety, we will load a group of cars, and then dismiss the cars. Please wait for directions. **Do not pass other vehicles.**
- During dismissal, please refrain from walking up to school to collect your child. Do not park across the street (to avoid the line) and walk up to the front doors.

- We only release students to those with the school-designed laminated number. If the laminated number or student backpack tag is lost, a \$5.00 assessment fee will be charged for replacements.
- For safety concerns, parents may only check out their child at the hour or half hour; for example, 11:00 AM or 11:30 AM, but not 11:15.
- No early check-outs after 1:00 PM. If your child has an appointment, please check them out before 1:00 PM.

Instructional Day

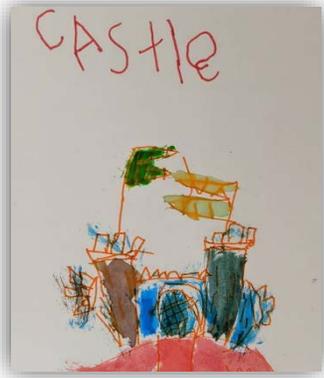
Our teachers are committed to providing high-quality, engaging experiences for your child each day. All purposefully planned activities address the following areas of your child's development:

- ✓ Social-Emotional
- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Literacy
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Science and Technology
- ✓ Social Studies
- ✓ The Arts



Each classroom is led by one certified lead teacher and one credentialed auxiliary teacher who work together to develop lessons based on the needs of all students. A typical instructional day includes the following: whole group lessons, small group activities, music & movement, free choice centers, teacher read-alouds, and singing. Each day, students will play outdoors for at least 60 minutes. Weekly, students engage in a science experiment facilitated by the teacher. As part of our state guidelines, all students observe a quiet rest time each day.

During 70 minutes of center time, students plan their work and review their progress. They work with peers to build giant towers, prepare a 'pizza party' for friends, or work at the light table to spell their name. Meanwhile, teachers encourage social-emotional skills and language development by playing along and asking questions. Teachers maintain detailed documentation of your child's growth in the *GOLD© Teaching Strategies* online platform.



Instead of worksheets, your child will sort and count bugs, measure pumpkins, and draw in their journals. We recognize the difference between *crafts* and art; therefore, students have access to a large variety of art materials and mediums, including sequins, watercolors, and tissue paper. The children freely use these materials to manipulate, explore, and learn about their world. This builds self-confidence, creativity, fine motor skills, and vocabulary. Free art can also be a tool for social-emotional growth, as it serves as a means of self-expression.

You will see tremendous growth in your child's development. You'll notice increased persistence, vocabulary, and attention to details, which supports their future learning in K-12. **Please support this development at home by considering the following:**

- Remind your child to ask for help when frustrated.
- Welcome their questions! Questions build initiative.
- Get involved in your child's play. Have fun with your child!
- Identify feelings regularly. Teach your child ways to cope with feelings, such as frustration, fear, and anger. Model how to handle BIG feelings. At school, we teach several breathing techniques.
- Have simple rules, and be consistent.
- Limit screen time to less than 1 hour of high-quality programming daily. [Read more about this from the American Academy of Pediatrics.](#)
- Establish a routine of **reading every day** with your child. Let your child select books from the local public library or as a gift. Read them over and over and over! And, talk about the story with your child.
- Create a space for learning at home. Perhaps it includes a small table, art supplies, paper, books, family photos, and measuring cups.



Emergency Contact

- Keep your emergency contact information updated. Notify the office of any changes.
- The only person who can make updates to emergency information is the primary parent/guardian who completed the original application.
- After several failed attempts to contact parents, the school personnel may call local authorities to help locate parents (department of human resources, police, medical, etc).

Dress Code

A student's school apparel must consist of clothing that is neat, clean, and appropriate for school. Appropriate refers to clothing that covers the body sufficiently enough not to cause

undue attention of school officials and/or other students. Clothing must not be exaggerated to the point that it distracts from the educational endeavors of the school. In general, students are expected to abide by the following guidelines:

- Clothing will be appropriate and decent.
- Clothing will be worn as it was intended.
- Clothing deemed mutilated (torn/shredded) or vulgar in style or design is prohibited.
- Many clothing articles (short shorts, halters, midribs, see-through tops, shoes with cleats or other sportswear) considered appropriate at home or on sports outings are **not** appropriate for school wear.
- Students may not wear caps, hats, or sunglasses inside the building unless under special circumstances.

The administrator will make the final judgement about the appropriateness of student clothing.

Attendance

Chronic tardiness is defined as late arrival or early departure more than 2 days per week. *Chronic absenteeism* is defined as missing more than 4 days per month without medical or other reasonable explanation. Please note that children who do not attend on a regular basis or are routinely late may be dismissed from the program. If attendance becomes problematic, the following steps will be taken:

1. Phone call or letter to parent after 2 unexcused absences or tardies.
2. Parent conference after 6 unexcused absences or tardies.
3. Parent conference after 8 unexcused absences or tardies.
4. Referral to the Alabama Office of School Readiness (OSR) monitor after 10 unexcused absences FOR POSSIBLE DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM.

Absences

Your child should attend school regularly unless they are ill. If your child has a fever, do not send them to school. If they are sent home with a fever, they must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning. If they vomit OR have diarrhea in the morning before coming to school, they MUST remain at home. Refer to district policy regarding [Covid-19 infections](#).

- Upload a written excuse or doctor's note for all absences within 3 days after your child returns to school.
- Upload Excuse <https://www.pcboe.net/excuse>

Check-ins

- Parents will ring the front door buzzer to identify themselves and wait at the entrance.
- A school employee will accompany the child to the classroom.
- Parents should complete the district form at the [Check-In](#) site to ensure their child is excused from being late.

<https://fs27.formsite.com/mloreman/checkin/index.html>

Check-Outs

- Parents must request a check-out at least 30 minutes in advance using the [Check-Out](#) site. <http://www.pcboe.net/checkout>
- Students will be checked out on the **hour and half-hour** only. **NO check-outs after 1:00 PM.**
- Parents will ring the front door buzzer to identify themselves and wait at the entrance.
- An employee will walk the student to the front door.



Required Parent Involvement

According to the state of Alabama and the *Office of School Readiness (OSR)*, family participation at the Early Learning Center is required. As per the OSR-Parent Contract, parents/guardians are responsible for **12 participation hours** each school year.

How do I get my 12 hours?

- ❖ Attend the required Parent Orientation in August
- ❖ Help your child with monthly Take-Home Projects
- ❖ Help the teacher with a special project at home
- ❖ Attend virtual parent enrichment meetings
- ❖ Attend mandatory parent/teacher conferences (2 per year)
- ❖ Submit a photo to your teacher of you reading with your child at home to support our #1000BooksBeforeKindergarten campaign

All of these activities enhance your child's learning and future success!

Home-School Communication

The teachers and administrator will ensure that parents remain informed of their child's educational experience. [See daily school photos by following us on Instagram or Facebook!](#)

- Teachers use the **BLOOMZ app** to communicate weekly; register with your child's teacher.
- Teachers send home items in your child's folder; please check back packs each night.
- The director will send monthly event calendars via email; therefore, please report any changes to email addresses to the secretary.
- The staff will notify you if your child is involved in a minor accident, such as a fall on the playground; therefore, please report changes in cell phone numbers.

Please let us know if you are not receiving adequate information.

Health

Screenings

During the school year your child will receive vision, hearing, dental, and physical screenings. We will utilize your child's assessment information to ensure that he/she has a quality experience at the Early Learning Center.

Medications

The Board of Education recommends that medication be administered by the parent or guardian at home. However, if under exceptional circumstances a child is required to take oral medication, board policy requires that only the school nurse or a trained designee will administer the medication, **including non-prescription over the counter medicines, in compliance with the following procedures.** Access required medical forms at <https://www.pcboe.net/site/Default.aspx?PageID=333>.

1. Parents must submit the district medication form signed by the parent or guardian and physician:
 - Medication must be in the original container or prescription bottle from the pharmacy with correct information concerning name, doctor, dosage and times.
2. The school nurse or trained designee will:
 - Inform appropriate school personnel of the medication
 - Keep a record of the administration of the medication
 - Keep medication in a locked cabinet
 - Return unused medication to parent or guardian only
3. The parent or guardian will assume responsibility for informing the administration of any changes in the student's health or change in medication.
4. The school administrator will retain the discretion to reject request for administration of medication.

***Parents must bring all medication to the office immediately upon arrival on the school campus. Students may not carry medication in their bag.**

Toilet Training

Parents should complete all toilet training prior to entrance into the Early Learning Center. The staff work closely with parents of students with special needs to help them meet goals for toilet training. For the health and safety of others, parents will be asked to supply pull-ups for any child who repeatedly soils their clothing during naptime. Under some circumstances, parents will be called to school to assist their child in cleaning themselves after toilet accidents.

Nutrition

Our district's Child Nutrition Department works hard to provide free well-balanced meals, including breakfast and lunch. If your child requires a special diet due to medical reasons, please notify the office and communicate with the teacher. The child's physician must supply medical documentation.

We stress the importance of hydration for proper brain function and encourage all parents to send a reusable water bottle to school with their child's name clearly written on the outside. Students have access to cold, filtered water during the school day.

School Treats (Birthdays, Celebrations, etc.)

Birthdays are certainly special days! However, given our current national health crisis, we cannot accept outside food. Please refrain from sending birthday treats until further notice.

Safety and Security

The Early Learning Center expects all adults to interact with one another in a professional manner as role models for our students. School is a safe, happy place for our students! Unreasonable or disorderly conduct, language, or mannerisms that threaten, intimidate, demean, harass, provoke staff or parents are unacceptable. Violence, or threats of violence displayed, plainly stated, or implied, is not tolerated by any adults on campus.

Drills

Students will participate in monthly practice emergency drills, as required by local and state officials. Drills include, fire, severe weather, intruder/lockdown, and shelter in place. Teachers pre-teach and practice drills often to properly prepare students without alarm.

Tobacco, Weapons, Firearms

The Early Learning Center abides by the policies of the Phenix City School Board, which promote healthy, safe environments. Therefore, all buildings and properties are to be free from and prohibit the use/distribution of smoke, tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs. Possession of firearms on school property is considered a felony, and ONLY allowed by law enforcement. Other items considered weapons are not allowed on the premises.

Surveillance Cameras

To help ensure safety and security throughout the school day, surveillance cameras are in place at the Early Learning Center. Students and visitors are monitored daily both inside and outside the school building.

Inclement Weather

For the safety of all involved, students will **NOT** be released to a parent, or any other adult on their list, during a severe weather warning. Rather, we suggest that the parent comes inside to wait for clearance.

On rare occasions, during significant rain or thunder storms near dismissal time, we may release students early to parents waiting in car line.

Notification Regarding Asbestos Containing Material (Public Law 99-519)

The United States Environmental Agency has established regulations regarding asbestos containing materials in school buildings. These regulations (Public Law 99-519) require certain action to occur in response to any asbestos containing material found in our schools. The Phenix City Board of Education has had an asbestos management program in place for several years. The Phenix City Board of Education had a re-inspection performed at all of their facilities in compliance with these regulations, and an asbestos management plan was developed. The plan describes in detail how any asbestos will be minimized. Students, parents, teachers, and others are invited to review this plan available in the director's office. Should you have any questions or desire further information, please contact the director.