

ECFE

Parent Handbook



Raiders

Inside find out...

- What is ECFE?
- What happens at ECFE?
- Who participates in ECFE?
- Why start at birth?
- Why involve the parents?
- Who benefits from ECFE?

ECFE

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Created in cooperation with the ECFE Advisory Council

Vision Statement

Early Childhood Family Education is an early path taken with your child to discover tools to raise confident, responsible, well-rounded children.

Mission Statement

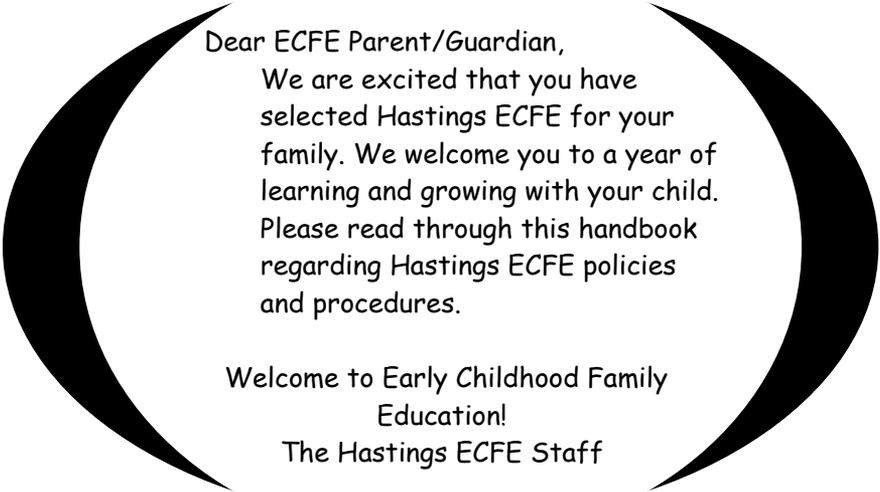
District 200 Early Childhood programs will provide opportunities for families and staff to listen, learn, teach and grow.

Listen...to what families tell us.

Learn...together about each child and parent's strengths and needs.

Teach...responsibly with regard to current research, best practices and individual needs.

Grow...together to provide the best possible community of support for families



Dear ECFE Parent/Guardian,
We are excited that you have selected Hastings ECFE for your family. We welcome you to a year of learning and growing with your child. Please read through this handbook regarding Hastings ECFE policies and procedures.

Welcome to Early Childhood Family
Education!
The Hastings ECFE Staff

Registration & Program Guidelines

- **Hastings ECFE** is a program designed for parents/guardians with young children birth up until kindergarten.
- **Hastings ECFE** wants every parent to have the opportunity to participate.
- **Preference** is given to Hastings School District families prior to accepting families residing beyond Hastings.
- **Enrollment** is processed by random drawing and then open enrollment continues throughout the year as places become available.
- **Hastings ECFE** reserves the right to cancel a class with too few participants enrolled.
- **Hastings ECFE** sibling care is for children through kindergarten age. (Minnesota state-funding restrictions do not allow us to accommodate older children).

Fees and Financial Assistance

- **Class** fees less than \$100.00 are payable at registration.
 - **Class** fees greater than \$100.00 can be made into 2 equal payments, half payable at registration.
 - **A Sliding Fee Scale** is based on family income for reduced class registration.
 - **If you do not qualify** for the sliding fee, based on income, but have other circumstances affecting your family, please call 651-480-7678 to explore fee reduction options.
 - **No ISD #200 resident** will be denied enrollment in ECFE because of inability to pay. All families with young children are welcome to attend ECFE!!
-

Arrival and Attendance

- **We ask** that you be on time to class; if you are leaving a child in Sibling Care, please allow extra time.
- **If you know** you will be unable to attend a class, please call your child's teacher and leave a message.
- **If you know** that you will not be using Sibling Care please call so that we may adjust our staffing.
- **Sibling Care** is not a drop-in service, regular attendance is expected. This helps with having the correct staffing in place
- **Promptness** in starting and ending the class helps it run smoothly.

Parent / Child Class Structure

Parent/Child Together Time

- This part of the class is for you and your child to explore together.
- This is special time to be together with your child, focus on positive actions.
- Look for ways to interact with you child.
- Do as many activities as you and your child enjoy, but don't feel you have to do them all..
- Leave the area as you found it, ready for the next child.
- Some activities are very popular and you may need to go to another activity if it is crowded. On the other hand, don't hurry your child, but finish and move on if other children are waiting.

Circle Time

- This portion of the class is fun and enjoyable most of the time, but not for every child all of the time.
- Accept the fact that your child may choose not to join in that day. Much learning occurs by watching others.
- If your child leaves the circle, just stay where you are, and invite your child back - "Come sit with me in the circle." Your child will probably come back if you continue to participate.
- If your child continues to want to leave or becomes disruptive, take him/her into the hallway and explain the choices; come back to circle time or wait in the hallway. Be matter-of-fact. Talk with teacher if you have a question or need additional help.

Children's Time

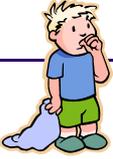
A licensed early childhood teacher and a classroom assistant provide fun learning activities to promote:

- Your child's social, emotional, intellectual, physical and language development.
- Your child's social skills by playing with other children.
- Your child's positive self-concept.

Parent's Time

A licensed parent educator meets with the parents in a different room.

- The group discusses child development, parent development and family development topics.
- Parents share ideas and experiences, discuss concerns, and gain support from one another.



Preparing for Separation

Separation anxiety is a normal, natural process for children and parents to experience. To help create a successful separation try the following suggestions.

- Show your child where you will be when you leave.
- Always tell your child that you are leaving and that you will come back.
- Use a matter-of-fact voice, try to hide your own emotions. It is normal for you to feel lonely, sad, guilty, and helpless.
- Give your child direction - tell your child what to do while you are gone.
- Allow your child to bring a comfort item to class, such as a blanket, stuffed animal or pacifier. Please label these items.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings and add the opportunity for change. For example, "I know that you will have fun once you are finished feeling sad. Play with the blocks when you are ready."
- After you say you are leaving it is important to just leave. Your child will learn to protest if you prolong the departure.

Immunizations: ECFE must have an immunization record on file for all students registered for ECFE classes or Sibling Care. Forms will be handed out the first week of attendance and should be returned to staff within two week. The form does not need a physician's signature.

Health Policy: Children should not come to ECFE if they are ill. Please keep your child home, if your child has any of the following in the last 24 hrs : diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, severe nasal congestion, harsh or persistent cough, fever, earache, or stomach ache.

Illness Reporting: Parents should notify ECFE if their child contracts a communicable disease (such as, chicken pox, head lice, pink eye). ECFE will notify the other parents so they can anticipate a possible illness. If a child becomes ill during a class, the parent will be contacted to pick up the child immediately.

HINI: Due to the numerous current HINI issues in our schools, ECFE has been required to check with each and every parent who does not attend their regular ECFE class. We are being required by our school district to record absences. We apologize for calling or emailing you to check on your child's absence. Thank you for your patience and many thanks for being extra cautious with your child's illness.



Hand Washing: In an effort to prevent and avoid the spread of the HINI and other viruses, ECFE is asking parents and children to wash their hands upon entering the classroom with either soap and water or hand sanitizer.

Sibling Care

Carefully read the procedure to ensure the safety of all the children in the program. Thank you.

Arrival:

1. Inform the staff that you are there and please wait in the room until your child has been marked present. Please do not allow child who will be attending class with you to go to their classroom without you.
2. Mark or label your child's personal items.
3. If you have specific instructions (bottles to be given at a certain time) please come with a note or write it down for the staff to refer to.
4. Staff does not diaper children. You will be called out of class to tend to your child's diapering needs.

Dismissal:

1. Other children with you must stay with you when you are picking up the sibling.
2. A staff person at the door will check your child off as you leave the sibling care room.

Safety and Security:

As you leave the main door of the building please check to be sure no other children are following you out the door unattended.

Selling of items by parents may be intrusive to some families. We ask that you refrain from doing this at ECFE.

Sharing of phone numbers or email addresses may only be initiated by individual parents. We can not provide class lists to families.

Please keep purses and other valuables with you at all times. ECFE is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

If a parent or child is injured, appropriate first aid will be administered. An Accident Report will be submitted to the Coordinator.

All mouthed toys should be placed in the sink or nearby bucket



Referrals:

If an ECFE teacher observes that a child might need an assessment and/or intervention by Early Childhood Special Education the teacher will:

- ◇ Discuss observations and concerns with the child's parents.
- ◇ Suggest options available.
- ◇ Discuss the matter with the ECFE Coordinator
- ◇ Encourage and facilitate at the parents request for further study of the child.

Early Childhood Screening:

This is a mandated program by the State of Minnesota for children ages 3-5 years old prior to attending kindergarten. Valuable developmental information in the areas of: cognition, social-emotional development, self-care skills, speech/language, hearing, vision, height and weight come from this process in one convenient location and in one day. Screening is a free service. Contact Liz Snobeck at 651-480-7017 to schedule an appointment.

Child Abuse or Neglect:

All ECFE staff are mandated by state law (MN Statutes 626 556 Subdivision 3) to report child abuse. This means that “a person who knows or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused” is required to contact Dakota County Social Services.

Snack:

We ask families to volunteer to take turns providing healthy snacks. Snack should be low in sugar and **peanut/nut free**. ECFE offers water to children at snack. Minnesota Health Department regulations state all snacks for the children **MUST** be commercially prepared and brought to school in an unopened package.

Dress:

Children and parents should dress for messy and active play. A change of clothing or diapers may also be needed.

Photographs:

The ECFE staff may take photographs during your child's class. With your consent, the unidentified pictures may be used in publications, brochures or on our website. If you do not want your child's picture used, please contact the teacher.

Videotaping:

ECFE classes may be videotaped during the year so that:

- parents have an opportunity to see what their children do when parents are not present
- ECFE staff have a visual when talking to parents about play, social development, activities and/or room arrangement

Restrictions for the videotape include:

- The tape may not leave the school premises
- Copies of the videotape are prohibited
- If you wish to videotape the class, please contact the teacher for permission. All parents must consent to the videotaping.

Cell Phones:

We understand that sometimes you are waiting for an important phone call. Please put your phone on vibrate and step out of the parent education classroom if you need to talk on the phone. If you are in the early childhood classroom please let a staff member know that you will be in the hallway. Please no texting in either classroom.

Ipads/Laptops:

As tempting as it might be to multitask, please leave your Ipads/laptops at home. This activity may be distracting to other participants and the instructors.

Scholastic Book Orders:



During the year, you and your child will have the opportunity to order affordable developmentally appropriate books through the Scholastic Book Club program. Participation in the book order program is optional. Some parents enjoy using this opportunity to share the importance of reading books.

What is ECFE?

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is a program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten enrollment. ECFE is based on the idea that the family provides a child's first and most important learning environment, and parents are a child's first and most significant teachers. ECFE works to strengthen families and enhance the ability of all parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children.

What happens in ECFE?

ECFE programs are tailored locally to meet the needs of families in each specific community. Most programs contain the following components:

- parent discussion groups
- play and learning activities for children
- parent-child activities
- special events for the entire family
- home visits
- early screening for potential children's health and developmental problems
- community resource information for families and young children, libraries of books, toys and other learning materials

Who participates in ECFE?

Parents and children participate together. Participation is voluntary. ECFE is committed to accessibility for everyone, so fees are based on a sliding fee scale or are waived for families unable to pay. It is the goal of ECFE to serve a representative cross-section of families with young children in each community. All families have different needs. Programs offer sessions with specific topics to meet these individual needs.

Why start at birth?

Brain research confirms the first three years are an extremely critical period in a child's development. This is especially true in the areas of language, social skills and the roots of intelligence. An infant's daily interactions with caregivers actually determine the structure of some areas of the brain itself. Getting involved in ECFE can help parents be better equipped to deal with the challenges of caring for these rapidly developing infants and toddlers.

Why involve the parents?

Research shows that early childhood programs involving parents and children are more effective than programs focusing exclusively on children. Educators and psychologists agree that it is vital for early childhood programs to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children. Involvement prior to kindergarten encourages parents to play an active role in their children's learning throughout their entire education. Children whose parents are involved in their education have been shown to be more successful in school.

Who benefits from ECFE?

Society benefits from strong families and healthy, well-developed children. The potential of ECFE to prevent or reduce later learning problems of children has been confirmed by evaluation of ECFE and similar programs. Parents involved in ECFE report feeling more supported and more confident in their role as parents. They also report having a better understanding of how children develop and having improved parenting skills. Research strongly suggests that dollars spent on ECFE are more than repaid by savings in remedial health, education and welfare costs later.

Community Resource Page

Dakota County Public Health

WIC Nutrition Program 952-891-7525

[WIC](#) is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program to help keep low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 healthy.

Child and Teen Check-ups 952-891-7500

Child & Teen Checkups (C&TC) is the name for Minnesota's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Program. C&TC is a comprehensive child health program provided to children and teens from newborn through the age of 20 who are enrolled in [Medical Assistance](#) or [MinnesotaCare](#).

Follow Along Program 651-554-6178

Families in Dakota County who have children age newborn to 4 years old.

Help Me Grow (Early Childhood Development)

952-891-7449

Early Intervention Services are for eligible infants, toddlers and preschoolers with developmental delays.

Home Visiting 651-554-6115

A public health nurse visit is available for first time parents or for families with young children with special needs.

Water Testing 952-891-7557

Dakota County invites those who use private wells for drinking water to have their water tested for nitrates.

Regina Hospital Community Education

651-480-4100

Early Pregnancy, Preparing for Birth Classes, Big Brother/Big Sister Classes, Childbirth Refresher, Infant CPR

Pleasant Hill Library 651-438-0200

Dakota County Social Services 952-891-7400

Program areas include child protection (abuse or neglect), children's mental health, child care licensing, developmental disabilities for children and adults, adult mental health, chemical health, and long term care/waivered services.

Child Care Resource and Referral 651-290-9704

<http://www.mnchildcare.org/>

The Minnesota Child Care Resource & Referral Network helps families find child care and understand their care options, supports child care providers through grants and education, and informs the community on the importance of child care.

Hastings Community Education 651-480-7670**Hastings Schools:****Early Childhood Family Education**

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Early Childhood Screening

651-480-7670

GED and Adult ESL

651-480-7677

Tilden Community Center

651-480-7670

School Closing:

Listen to KDWA or WCCO for school closings or check the Hastings District 200 website. If classes are cancelled or a delayed start, ECFE will not meet that day.

Donations:

ECFE appreciates donations of the following items for its programs:

- Kleenex
- 12 oz Styrofoam cups
- Box of Salt
- Parenting Room Beverages (tea, cocoa)
- Dress up clothes
- Doll clothes
- Puzzles
- Children's books
- Craft materials and/or fabric for crafts
- Hand Sanitizer



Personal Notes

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