

# Family Handbook 2023-2024



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## Who We Are

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Clayton Early Learning succeeds in promoting educational equity through a powerful and unique model that harnesses the synergy of four dynamic initiatives of research, practice, training and policy. Clayton Early Learning is home to a diverse community of learners encompassing staff, children, and families. Within the school community continuity of care is supported for both children and families through a birth to age five continuum and the location of infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms in one intimate geographic area. Our work is guided by the results of research studies about the best ways to support children and their families.

The Educare Denver school is a part of a coast-to-coast network of state-of-the-art Educare schools. The Educare model provides programming and instructional support to develop the early skills and nurture the strong parent-child relationships that create the foundation for successful learning.

Our School is unique because we aim to improve outcomes for not only the families enrolled in our program but also the community at large. We do this by:

- Providing high-quality services to the children and families enrolled in the program
- Opening our doors to others in the early childhood community who want to learn about what we do, and contributing to the knowledge base about how to best serve families through our research and evaluation studies.

As a result, you may find that Clayton Early Learning is different from other programs. Administrators and teachers from other early childhood programs, as well as students preparing for a career in early childhood education, will come to our program to observe what we do. Families of children enrolled in our school will be asked to participate in research projects. All of our research is focused on providing information that will help us improve the work we do with families. While participation in any particular research project is voluntary, families who do not wish to have their children participate in any such research projects should thoughtfully reconsider whether a Clayton Early Learning School is a good match for them.

### Mission and Vision

#### Vision Statement:

With the support of family and community, every child's first five years create the foundation to thrive.

#### Mission Statement:

Clayton Early Learning is an innovation hub that fosters thriving, equitable communities by partnering with families to **nurture** a whole child, whole family approach to the early years, **discover** what works, and **advance** systems change.

## Values

At Clayton, we work to foster a community characterized by trust, dignity, love, and justice, with our children and families, our team members, and other partners on our campus and beyond. We see these values in action each and every day as they strengthen our Clayton community and our service to the children, families, and educators we serve.

### At Clayton we value:

1. **Community** fosters belonging, resiliency, stability, and strength. We are committed to creating a caring, trauma-informed, professional community at Clayton and we are committed to being a positive member of the many communities we partner with and serve. Community means living the seven Sanctuary commitments: nonviolence, emotional intelligence, social learning, democracy, open communication, social responsibility, and growth and change.
2. **Collaboration** builds trust and relationships and brings new ideas, skills, and knowledge to help us do better work. We are committed to approaching our work as one team across Clayton. Collaboration means working across teams and departments and with our external partners.
3. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging** leads us to reflect the communities we serve and bring the widest variety of ideas and innovation to our work. We are committed to building and sustaining an organization centered on diversity, equity, and belonging. Diversity means building a team that is reflective of the world around us, in all aspects of our personal and professional backgrounds. Equity means recognizing that we need to provide different resources to meet different needs and circumstances that are often the result of systemic injustice; it is core to everything we do in service of our children and families and in how we work with each other. Inclusion refers to a community where all members are and feel respected and are able to participate and achieve their potential. A true sense of belonging means that everyone who enters the Clayton campus is valued for who they are and can meaningfully say “I belong here.”
4. **Growth** allows us to develop as professionals and to provide the best services we can to the children, families, and educators we serve. We are committed to growing as individuals and as an organization. Growth means we are continually learning how to do our individual and collective work better and we adapt and evolve our programs and practices to reflect new learning and to meet changing needs.
5. **Stewardship** enables us to have the greatest impact we can with the resources we have. We are committed to being good stewards of our community and our resources.



Stewardship means using our financial resources wisely and responsibly so that we can sustain our work into the future, taking care of our unique and beautiful campus so it can remain a resource for our community, and caring for our community and team and treating each other with respect and responsibility.

6. **Fun** reduces stress, keeps us motivated, builds connections, and models for our children the joy that can come with learning and working together. We are committed to having fun! Fun means noticing and sharing things that bring us joy, being creative in our work, making connections with each other, and finding humor and hope in our work.

### **Children with Special Needs**

The learning activities that help maximize the development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities or special needs are little or no different from activities designed for children who do not have disabilities or special needs. There are, however, adaptations to the environment that may be necessary for some children with physical, emotional or sensory impairments to help them achieve autonomy and successful experiences. Children with identified special needs have an *Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)* for birth to three-year-olds or an *Individualized Education Plan (IEP)* for preschoolers. These plans outline specific services from which the child will benefit. Clayton Early Learning will work in partnership with you to plan the most supportive environment for your child's success. Our school, including our outdoor play environments, meet the regulations of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.

### **Theory**

Quality early childhood programs are created and implemented by adopting and adapting evidence-based early childhood developmental and educational theories. Our school and programs continuously strive to improve program quality and child outcomes by bringing life to early childhood theoretical approaches. These approaches inform us about best practices for serving both the Clayton community, the greater early childhood community and field.

### **Approach**

Through the reflective practice process, Clayton Early Learning assesses school quality on an ongoing basis. This enables us to address areas needing improvement; establish goals and benchmarks; and adapt, change, and implement the most promising early childhood practices in a responsive and efficient manner.

## Parent/Guardian Rights and Responsibilities

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### As a Clayton Early Learning parent/guardian, you have the right to:

- Have your culture, beliefs, concerns, and values welcomed, appreciated, respected, and reflected in your child's program.
- Receive information about all aspects of the program communicated to you in a language you can understand.
- Visit or observe your child in the school environment.
- Ask questions of and give feedback to staff members.
- Confidentiality in matters involving the welfare of every child and family in accordance with program policies and the law.
- Be notified of significant changes in staff within 48 hours.
- Be notified of policy and procedural changes within 48 hours.

### As a Clayton Early Learning parent/guardian, you have the responsibility to:

- Understand this handbook and adhere to its guidelines and procedures.
- Ensure the program has current emergency contact information and that your emergency card is up to date (e.g., current home, work, and cell phone numbers).
- Keep your child's immunization and well child exam records current. Disclose essential information about the care of your child with staff.
- Respect, approach, and dialogue with staff as professionals who work with you to provide a quality early childhood education program.
- Respect the diversity, culture, and language of all children, families and staff in the Clayton community.
- Raise issues promptly and directly, seeking mutually agreeable solutions that honor the needs of the organization and your family.
- Participate in goal setting as well as parent-staff conferences, family meetings, home visits, and other activities as necessary to individualize a curriculum plan for your child.
- Maintain 85% attendance. This means that your child should not miss more than TWO DAYS per month.
- Bring your child to school on time as indicated in your parent agreement. It is important to ensure your child participates in ALL the activities, including breakfast and lunch.
- Pick your child up on time as indicated in your parent agreement. The school is open until 5:00 P.M., however, your parent agreement has an individualized pick-up time identified. Routines are important for your child and the school staff.



## CLAYTON EARLY LEARNING

- Keep your child safe and in your direct supervision while he or she is in your care at school, especially during drop-off and pick-up. Close proximity ensures your child's safety and builds school readiness skills as they learn to stay close to their caregiver.
- For Home-Based families, attend socializations and/or field trips twice a month, meet weekly in the home with staff at a regularly designated time, and maintain 85% attendance for home visits and socializations.

## Services

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### Education and Early Childhood Development

At Clayton Early Learning, we offer a variety of age-appropriate learning experiences that support a child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. Classroom activities also include an emphasis on physical health, dental health, personal safety, and nutrition. The teachers in the classrooms and the Child Family Educator provide information on child development and parenting. In partnership with families, Clayton Early Learning works to support all aspects of your child's development. Families and staff are partners working together to support all aspects of your child's development and individualized learning plan. This individual learning plan becomes part of a written document that outlines your child's goals, steps to achieve these goals, and steps to review your child's progress in meeting these goals.

### Child Health and Developmental Services

Clayton Early Learning is committed to wellness and embraces a holistic view of health for children, families, and staff. The objective is to ensure that through collaboration, all of a child's health and developmental concerns are identified, and children and families are linked to an ongoing source of continuous, accessible care to meet their basic health needs.

### Physical Health

Preventive health care is vital to a child's overall growth and development. The health team works with teachers, Child Family Educators, Family Engagement Liaisons, and families to support children in receiving preventive health care services, well-child checks, immunizations, and screenings for hearing, vision and dental health.

### Nutrition

With your assistance, your Child Family Educator conducts regular nutrition screenings to support the development of healthy eating habits for you, your family, and your child. If needed or desired, a Registered Dietician is available for consultation. All meals and snacks served at Clayton Early Learning are "*family style*" to enhance children's development of self-help and social skills.

### Mental Health

Clayton Early Learning supports the social and emotional well-being of children and families. We believe the relationship you are developing with your child is important. The staff is available to help with problem solving and resource referrals.

Mental health clinicians assist staff in developing strategies that support the social and emotional needs of the children in the classroom and at home. In addition, they are also available to connect families with culturally relevant social and emotional supports through individual consultations, parent workshops, parent support groups, and referrals.

## **Child Development**

At Clayton Early Learning, we individualize your child's learning plan to support his or her inclusion and make special adaptations based on needs. Ongoing observations and assessments are used on a regular basis to assist families and staff in setting goals for children. Services available to all enrolled children include developmental screening and identifying special needs, assisting in referrals for evaluation, and helping you arrange to receive services that are indicated as needed during the evaluations. You, or your Child Family Educator, may request a referral to receive additional services from staff or specialists. We believe that enrolling children with special needs in the program is an enriching experience for all children and staff and a minimum of 10% of the Clayton Early Learning total enrollment is available to children with disabilities.

## **Family Partnerships**

Your Child Family Educator works collaboratively with you to identify family goals through the Family Partnership Agreement. These agreements describe the goals for your family and specify the resources available and services needed to reach your goals. Your Child Family Educator will help you locate desired community resources and assist you in accessing them. Referrals can be made to agencies such as those offering childcare, emergency assistance, intervention services, continuing education, job training, and employment services. Additionally, educational workshops, parenting and nutrition classes, and literacy-focused training are often offered onsite by Clayton Early Learning staff in an effort to assist you in reaching your goals.

## **Community Partnerships**

Clayton Early Learning works in partnership with many community agencies to provide resources such as health care, mental health services, nutrition, early intervention, training and education, cultural events and learning activities for families. The Head Start Health Services Advisory Committee meets regularly to ensure comprehensive program services and includes professionals, parents and volunteers from the community. Transition services are supported through collaborative relationships and agreements between our schools and those you may be considering for your child's ongoing school experience. Your Child Family Educator can assist you in locating and advocating for needed services.

## Program Options

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At Clayton Early Learning, children birth-to-5 grow and learn in state-of-the-art environments to arrive at kindergarten prepared for academic success. Our practices in the classroom and with families are research-based and outcome-focused. We rigorously evaluate and align effective educational practices from birth through third grade to make sure children succeed, and we disseminate promising practices through our focused professional development and policy work.

### **Extended Day (Children ages six weeks – five)**

Clayton Early Learning provides licensed, high quality early childhood education in our school located on the Clayton Campus. The hours of operation for Extended Day is 7:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. In the extended-day option, financial assistance may be available through the *Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)*, *TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)*, or *Head Start*. Teachers make two home visits and have two parent-staff conferences per year. Child Family Educators meet on a regular basis with families and teachers. Please speak with your Child Family Educator if you are interested in more information.

### **Full Day (Children ages three – five)**

In this option, children attend class in the school for a Full Day from 8 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. In the Full Day option, financial assistance may be available through TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) or Head Start. Teachers make two home visits and have two parent-staff conferences per year. Full Day program aligns with a nine-month school year.

### **Home-Based (Children ages birth – five)**

Clayton Early Learning provides a home visitation option for income eligible children and families. Through weekly 90-minute home visits, the Child Family Educator works with the families to build strong relationships that support information sharing and achieving family goals and aspirations in culturally and linguistically responsive ways. The home environment is used to create rich learning opportunities that build on everyday routines and support the child's overall development. This option is designed to ensure a successful learning experience for both parent and child working together in their own home. All home-based services also include monthly socializations/field trips (if age appropriate), and parent meetings. Home-based programming for birth to three-year-olds (Early Head Start) spans twelve months, while the 3-5 year old program (HIPPIY/Head Start) aligns with a nine-month school year.

### **Play & Learn**

Children and their caregivers attend sessions twice each week during the nine-month school year. Community field trips are offered twice monthly during the summer months. Sessions are designed for caregivers to interact with the child in ways that support the child's learning and development.

## **Prenatal**

Prenatal and postpartum services are available for income-eligible women. We provide prenatal education, including health and nutrition education and support prenatal mothers in accessing community medical and dental services. The program consists of a weekly visit with the Child Family Educator and a visit once per trimester by the health team. Education, links to community services, and screening in the areas of health, nutrition, and mental health are the focus for the postpartum mother and newborn. The Child Family Educator and health team provide these services..

## **Community Collaborations**

Services are available for income-eligible families in community childcare programs operated by *Venture for Success Academy, Little Einstein, Catholic Charities of Denver, Florence Crittenton Early Learning Center, and Early Success Academy*. Our collaborations offer parents additional locations to choose from for their child's early learning experiences. The child's teacher makes two home visits and conducts two parent-staff conferences per year. Each family receives a parent handbook from the community site.

## **Denver Preschool Program**

Clayton Early Learning is an approved provider in the Denver Preschool Program. The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) is the result of a voter approved initiative to provide tuition credits for parents/guardians, and quality improvement grants to preschools. DPP is open and voluntary for all Denver children the year before they are eligible for kindergarten. All enrolling Clayton Early Learning families with age-eligible children complete applications to DPP and credits are applied to tuition only.

## Our Curricula

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The curriculum model that Clayton Early Learning has adopted is designed to meet the following definition of curriculum. “*Curriculum*” means a written plan that includes: (i) The goals for children's development and learning; (ii) The experiences through which they will achieve these goals; (iii) What staff and parents do to help children achieve these goals; and (iv) The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum.” (Head Start Performance Standard 1304.3(a)(5)) Our curricular framework supports school readiness for all children. The design is comparable to the design of a house. The “foundation” of the curriculum is built on well-organized classrooms, research-based instructional interactions between teachers and child, and social-emotional support. The “pillars or walls” of the framework are the curriculum goals, activities, materials, and roles for parents and staff and the ongoing assessment and screening that guide the planning that is done for each individual child. The roof of the model defines the modifications and strategies that will be used to support children’s learning. Our program options use several different curricula and approaches, as described below.

### The School-Based Curriculum

Clayton Early Learning has chosen *The Creative Curriculum* to be the curriculum for all classrooms serving children from birth to 5 years of age. This curriculum has five components: 1) How children develop and learn, 2) How the classroom is set up, 3) What children will learn (activities and experiences), 4) How teachers will care for and teach the children, and 5) Partnerships with parents in working with their children. This is all designed and based on sound research and theory in early childhood development.

Additionally, in the Infant and Toddler classrooms the *Reggio Emilia* inspired approach is used to deliver the curriculum. This approach is based on fundamental values about how children learn. *Reggio* sees children as active and competent participants in constructing their own learning as they interact with the environment. The teachers learn along with the children and guide them in documenting their learning, making it visible to others. The environment or classroom is considered a “third teacher” and will include many authentic and natural materials for children to use in representing concepts. As a parent, you play a key role in delivering the curriculum and we encourage you to participate in your child’s learning by extending it from the classroom into your own home. Infant and Toddler teachers have a variety of other curriculum resources that guide their practice. For preschool aged children, the *Project Approach* is used to deliver the curriculum in classrooms. Guided by children’s natural curiosity about their environment, teachers plan opportunities to investigate topics of interest to the children in their classroom. Teachers facilitate rich investigations about the topic that may include trips to field sites where experts can provide more information to expand their experience.

Children document their learning through writing, drawing, photography, and designing models with natural materials.

Preschool teachers also have additional resources that supplement the primary curriculum. These include *Second Step* (a violence prevention program is used support the social/emotional development of all children), *Talking About Touching* (a curriculum that teaches children simple safety rules that

guide them toward safe decision making in a variety of situations), and *Erickson Math* (a math curriculum).

Please see Guidance and Discipline for more information about *Conscious Discipline*, our social emotional curriculum.

### **The Home-Based Curriculum**

The Prenatal to Age 3 home-based program is implementing a new *Partners for a Healthy Baby* curriculum. This research-based curriculum addresses the health and development of the child in the context of the various needs of expectant and parenting families. The program is also supplementing the curriculum with *Developmental Parenting*. This approach is research-based and focuses on parent-child interactions that support child development.

The Preschool home-based program uses the *Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters* (HIPPY) curriculum. Based on the belief that parents play a critical role as their child's first teacher, this family focused curriculum helps parents provide educational experiences that support school readiness for their child.

### **Play & Learn**

Play & Learn focuses on the interaction between the child and the caregiver. These interactions are supported through the *Learning Through Relating Curriculum* and *Dialogic Reading*.

### **Ongoing Authentic Assessment**

The *Creative Curriculum* is part of an integrated system of curriculum and assessment. The assessment system is called *Teaching Strategies GOLD*<sup>®</sup>. All children in both school-based and home-based options are assessed with this tool on an ongoing basis through observations in the classroom or home. The data that is generated through these observations is used to plan for individualized instruction and support school readiness for each child.



## Organization of the Classrooms in the School

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### Staff-Child Ratios

Classrooms	# of Adults to Children	Max # of Children
Infant Rooms	3:8	8
Toddler Rooms	3:8	8
Full day Preschool Rooms	2:16	16
Extended day Preschool Rooms	3:16	16

All classrooms feature high quality learning environments to help your child develop his/her skills to reach individualized lesson plan goals.

### The Staff

Clayton Early Learning is committed to recruiting highly qualified staff who reflect the demographics of the children and families we serve. There is ongoing training throughout the year for all teachers to link research with their knowledge of best practice in the early childhood field. A strong training plan ensures our ability to create the best possible learning environment for children and promotes individual competence for early childhood teachers. Teachers and staff are trained in First Aid, CPR, and Universal Precautions. A criminal record check by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, along with a review from the Central Registry, is obtained for all Clayton Early Learning employees.

# Guidance and Discipline Agreement

The foundations of self-regulation begin at birth when adults interact with babies in ways that teach them to feel safe, to feel loved and to know that their needs will be met. These early interactions with parents, guardians and caregivers establish the foundation to develop the child's capacity to wait, give, trust, love, and care for others.

Child behavior *is* a form of communication. Our goal is to teach children to become conscious of hurtful behavior patterns and find respectful ways to get their needs met. We teach these skills through a positive approach built upon empathetic and loving relationships. This requires from our teachers an understanding of child development, of the framework on which to build higher order thinking and of how to individualize curriculum plans

Clayton Early Learning utilizes an evidence-based, trauma informed approach called Conscious Discipline®. This curriculum empowers the adult with the self-awareness, brain information, developmental knowledge, and useable skills necessary to create safe, connected, problem-solving homes and schools. This approach may look very different than the discipline approaches you may have experienced in school!

We focus on:

- Teaching children the social-emotional and communication skills necessary to manage themselves, resolve conflict, prevent bullying, and develop pro-social behaviors.
- Creating a School Family that builds connections between families and schools, teachers and teachers, teachers and students, and students and students to ensure the optimal development of all. We believe that nurturing a sense of belonging within our School Family is the key ingredient to fostering children's willingness to learn; wiring the brain for impulse control and self-regulation; and reducing stress while sustaining attention.
- Empowering teachers to consciously respond to daily conflict and transform it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children.
- Constructing routines, rituals and structures that leave coercion, fear and external rewards behind, and encourage intrinsic motivation, helpfulness, problem-solving and connections.

Clayton Early Learning **does not** use the following as a form of discipline:

- Withhold, deny or force food or rest
- Punish children for toileting accidents
- Use corporal or harsh punishments, including pinching, shaking, spanking, punching, biting, kicking, rough handling, hair pulling, humiliation or fear-based discipline.
- Use separation or time-outs
- Use restraints, meaning the use of physical force or other means to restrict the child's freedom of movement

Clayton Early Learning complies with Head Start rules and regulations which states "A program must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child's behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature. A program cannot expel or unenroll a child from Head Start because of

a child's behavior.”

### **Guidance for Families**

We need YOU! You are your child's first and primary teacher. Research has shown that caregiver involvement goes hand in hand with children's success in school. Therefore, we can't do this alone.

We encourage you, your child and our staff to communicate with one another openly about the goals we are working on in school. If your child has had a difficult day, we invite you speak with him or her and with your teacher or other staff member or specialist to engage in critical thinking and problem solving about strategies for creating a supportive School Family.

There are times when we will work with families to create a child's individual positive behavior support plan which is intentionally designed to extend beyond the school day. This type of plan may include specific strategies for parents/guardians in order to address significant and repetitive behaviors that raise safety concerns.

Examples of behaviors that benefit from this type of plan include:

- Fighting, hitting, biting, or other physical aggression
- Taking or damaging school property
- Using abusive language/gestures
- Leaving classroom or playground without permission
- Throwing objects, tipping over shelving

We look forward to working as a team with each of our families to support all students in developing the communication and social emotional skills necessary to build cooperation, engage in constructive problem solving and achieve academic success.

## Families in the Program

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Your participation in the Schools at Clayton Early Learning is highly valued and supports our school community. We ask that you make a commitment to volunteering at least eight (8) hours per year. There are a number of ways in which your time and talents can be helpful and useful to the program. Talk with your Child Family Educator, your child's Teacher, or Policy Council members about other volunteer opportunities you would find meaningful.

### Family-Staff Conferences and Home Visits

School-based parents/guardians are expected to participate in two parent-staff conferences and two staff home visits during the program year, as well as ongoing communication with their Child Family Educator. Home-based parents/guardians are expected to participate in weekly home visits and two monthly socializations/field trips. Prenatal families are expected to meet with their Child Family Educators weekly, meet with the nurse once each trimester, and meet with the dietician once during their pregnancy. (See *Program Options* for more information).

### Family Meetings

Clayton Early Learning provides a variety of opportunities for parents to connect and communicate. Each classroom conducts regularly scheduled family meetings. These informal meetings are designed to provide parents an opportunity to connect to their child's curriculum and extend learning into the home, meet other families, receive information about their classroom and Clayton Early Learning activities, provide feedback, explore areas of interest, and participate in a family/child activity. Check the calendar for dates and times. Translation services and refreshments are provided.

Quarterly All School Events provide a forum for parents to engage in dialogue on topics of their choosing, presented in various formats, all of which are interactive and focused on parent-child interaction.

### Family Newsletter

A family newsletter is published every month. Interesting articles on child development and upcoming parent activities are included in this newsletter. Additionally, efforts are made to include articles and information reflective of various cultures. If you have suggestions for the newsletter, or would be interested in helping with this publication, contact your Child Family Educator.

### Early Head Start Policy Council and Head Start Policy Committee

The Early Head Start Policy Council and Head Start Policy Committee consists of parent/guardian members, as well as community and Board representatives. The Council and Committee both meet on the 1st Thursday of the month from 5:00 – 7:30 p.m. at Educare Denver. Check our calendar for dates and times. Dinner, childcare, transportation, and translation services are provided for members during all meetings.

The Policy Council and Policy Committee members elect their own officers who conduct Council and Committee business and lead the members through decision-making processes.

The Early Head Start Policy Council and Head Start Policy Committee are separate from each other, and membership is based upon the program that the children of parents/guardians participate in. Elections are held annually for each, and representatives can hold office for a maximum period of three years. Letters are sent in the fall of each year to every parent/guardian informing them of the election process and Policy Council and Policy Committee responsibilities. Interested parents/guardians then complete an enclosed form, *“Why I Would Make a Good Policy Council or Policy Committee Representative”*, stating their interest in running for office. There are at least two election days in the schools where voting tables are set up for parents to cast their votes. Home-based family ballots are hand delivered by the Child Family Educator.

The purposes of the Council and Committee are to serve as a forum for shared governance over the early childhood education being offered; initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvement; assist in planning and coordinating agency-wide activities; encourage parent/guardian participation in the program; and work in partnership to develop; review; and approve or disapprove policies, procedures, grants, funding requests, and personnel matters (e.g., new hires and terminations).

### **The Family Leadership Committee**

The Family Leadership Committee is open to all Clayton Early Learning parents/guardians. The Committee meets monthly and has the responsibility to plan, coordinate, and organize ongoing parent activities with the assistance of staff. Family Leadership Committee members elect their own officers who conduct committee business and plan the Quarterly All Family Meeting where they lead parents/guardians through decision-making processes.

### **Educational Opportunities for Parents**

Clayton Early Learning offers workshops and training activities throughout the year in which you can participate. These opportunities can teach new skills and provide information about interesting, useful subjects. Contact your Child Family Educator or your child’s teacher for more information.

## Guidelines and Procedures

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### Families Served

Clayton Early Learning provides pregnant women and diverse families with children from birth to age five continuous, intensive, and comprehensive early childhood development and family support services.

### Enrollment

During the enrollment and entry processes, parents select a program option that meets their needs. Enrollment materials are completed, and documentation collected as required for Early Head Start and Head Start regulations, licensing regulations, tuition assistance and to provide high quality comprehensive services. All enrollments are approved by an enrollment committee prior to a child's entry to ensure a successful transition for the child, family and staff. Child files are kept locked and secured. Families receiving Head Start services must live within our service boundaries to maintain their enrollment.

At the beginning of the program year, all families have the opportunity to attend an open house held at each school where they can meet the staff and familiarize themselves with the campus. Families who enroll in Head Start services through one of our community collaborations have the opportunity to attend an orientation at their respective site. Families wishing to attend events where they need special provisions and accommodation should contact their Child Family Educator to ensure their needs are met.

### Confidentiality

Information regarding Clayton Early Learning families is kept confidential within the program. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis with professionals who provide child and family services and to ensure the safety of children enrolled in the program. Information is shared with outside providers only with appropriate authorization.

### Communication

Effective communication with children and families is central to the program's core beliefs. Clayton Early Learning ensures that both English-speaking and non-English-speaking families receive quality, culturally relevant services. Bilingual staff may be available to assist with translation. If a bilingual staff person is not available in the family's native language, the program will utilize contract interpreters or technology support. Friends and family members will only be used as interpreters at the request of the family. Requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Every effort will be made to provide an educational staff person that speaks the language of your child. Where education staff are not available in your child's native language, a variety of teaching strategies and techniques in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) will be used to support children's learning, creativity, language, literacy, and numeracy skills. Classroom environments reflect the community and the culture, language, and ethnicity of the children and families.

### Child Abuse and Neglect

Clayton Early Learning is required by law to report any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect to the *Department of Human Services*. The Clayton Early Learning philosophy is to act in the best interest

of the child, to be as supportive and as non-threatening as possible to the family, and to maintain the child and family in the program. Parents are responsible for reporting any inappropriate staff behaviors or actions toward children. Suspected child abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian, staff, or other persons may be made to:

*Denver Department of Human Services*  
1200 Federal Blvd.  
Denver, CO 80204  
Child Abuse Hotline: 720-944-3000  
Main Number: 720-944-3666

Detailed child abuse and neglect procedures are outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures Manual (copies are located in various locations within the school; ask your Child Family Educator). Information regarding reporting child abuse is provided to parents during the enrollment process and parents are informed of staff's mandatory reporting requirements of suspected abuse and neglect prior to their child entering into the program.

### **Grievance and Problem-Solving Process**

Families should feel free to discuss any school-related concerns with teachers and their Child Family Educator as most issues can be resolved at this level. If an issue cannot be resolved, parents are encouraged to take the concern to a Manager of Education or Family Services (who supervises the Lead Teacher and the CFE/Family Engagement Liaison), or any Specialist/Coordinator. Grievance and problem-solving discussions will be documented in our database by the Manager or Specialist/Coordinator. If an issue cannot be resolved at that level, families are encouraged to take the concern to the school Director. Please refer to the Important Numbers section for contact information. Educare Denver is led by the School Director.

### **School Closings**

While Clayton closely monitors Denver Public Schools' (DPS) district-wide closures, Clayton makes closure decisions independent of the district. The decision is made as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration among other factors the weather forecasts (start and stop times), ability to clear parking lots and sidewalks on our campuses, road and bus stop conditions, wind and wind chill, and temperature.

School closing announcements are made on the following:

- Clayton Weather Line: 303.355.4411 x359
- Clayton Website: [www.claytonearlylearning.org](http://www.claytonearlylearning.org)
- Clayton Social Media: Facebook, Twitter
- Local radio (850 KOA) and television news stations (Channels CW2 (KWGN), CBS4 (KCNC), 7NEWS (KMGH), 9NEWS (KUSA), FOX31 (KDVR))
- Text messages to your cell phone to notify you of closures. Please discuss with your CFE how you can opt-in to receive text messages.



Due to the age of our children, if we feel their safety would be at risk, Clayton Early Learning may close in extreme circumstances even if DPS is open. Attempts will be made to notify parents when Clayton Early Learning closures are different from DPS.

## Transportation

Clayton Early Learning is committed to the safe and responsible transportation of children. Transportation may be available for activities; field trips; and for home-based families. The driver will follow vehicle safety guidelines for children and adults. Use of an appropriate car seat is required. Children 2½ years old and younger must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. To receive transportation without a parent or guardian present, children 2½ years of age or older must have written permission from their parent or guardian to be transported. Child Family Educators are available to support families in identifying transportation solutions.

## Media

Videos and video games are not utilized in Clayton Early Learning classrooms. Computers and SMART technology may be used in our older toddler classrooms and preschool classrooms and limited to two 15-minute times per day, not exceeding 30 minutes. Children with personal adaptive technology are allowed to use this. If used, computer software is previewed and age appropriate. Music is played on classroom devices. Discs and tapes are previewed and age appropriate.

## Classroom Closing Procedures

These procedures are posted in every classroom. Child attendance is tracked and documented throughout the day. At school closing (6 p.m.), every classroom, closet, bathroom, and hallway are checked to guarantee all children are safely out of the buildings.

## Volunteers

Clayton Early Learning highly values the participation of families and community members. Importantly, the use of volunteers also assists Clayton Early Learning in meeting its 25% required match for federal funding through the monetary value of volunteer time, donations, and gifts. Volunteers in the classroom must be at least 18 years of age (12 years of age and older if accompanied by an adult volunteer) and:

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to observe their child's classroom and should contact their teacher or Child Family Educator to schedule a visit.
- Individuals and family members who volunteer must complete a *Volunteer Interest Assessment* and submit it to a Child Family Educator. The CFE will work with a Family Engagement Liaison for review and to schedule a time to meet regarding assignment and orientation. For both community members and regular classroom volunteers, a background check and negative Tuberculosis (TB) test is required prior to volunteering in a classroom. Volunteers will work with a Family Engagement Liaison to complete a background check and TB test.
- All volunteers will receive a Volunteer Handbook and an orientation (including a review of Clayton Early Learning's confidentiality, discipline, and child abuse guidelines) before their service begins.

- Volunteers must be supervised and have clearly established duties.
- Volunteers cannot be used to fulfill the required staff-child ratio.
- Where Clayton Early Learning collaborates with a community agency such as the Denver Public Library or Volunteers of America to place volunteers, that agency's screening process is sufficient to meet program requirements.

"Regular" is defined in this section by:

- Any volunteer who participates for 6 hours+ a week on an ongoing basis
- Any volunteer who participates for 2+ hours a day consistently
- Any volunteer who is completing mandated volunteer hours for coursework that exceeds 6+ hours.

## Holiday and Celebration Guidance

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The program is interested in facilitating meaningful experiences for children; therefore, we do not emphasize specific holiday celebrations. Children will be encouraged to share meaningful experiences from their own family traditions with the class. Conversations about the diversity of cultures will be encouraged and will be included as part of our inclusive curriculum and program.

Multicultural experiences should not be limited to a celebration of holidays and should include food, music, families, shelter, and other aspects common to all cultures.

*In keeping with our Nutrition Policy, we do not allow families to bring any food or treats into the school during regular school hours.*

### Definitions

- **Holiday:** a day fixed by law or cultural custom on which traditions or activities are celebrated in honor of an event or person.
- **Tradition:** a handing down of cultural statements, beliefs, legends, customs, or information from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or by practice.
- **Celebration:** To observe a day or event with ceremonies of respect, festivity, or rejoicing.

### Holiday and Celebration Philosophy

- To be responsive to cultural diversity
- To promote activities that are appropriate to a child's level of development
- To affirm the parents' contribution to their child's education
- To support families in decreasing holiday stress and depression

### Guidance for Holiday Recognition

- Learning about cultures in school can broaden children's awareness of their own and other's cultural experiences, if they are thoughtfully used as part of an inclusive curriculum about cultural diversity.
  - Activities about a holiday should not be a child's first introduction to a culture. First, children need to understand who people are and what their daily lives are like in order to have a better understanding of the holiday. We support representing cultures and diversity throughout the year and not just on special holidays. In classrooms and curriculum, children and parents should be able to see some or all of the following:
    - Pictures of all types of families

- Books from different cultures
  - Dolls that represent different ethnicities
  - Music from different cultures
- As an accredited program of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), we are provided guidelines for celebrating holidays.
    - Families and program staff ask themselves why children should learn about this holiday. Is it developmentally appropriate for those in the group? Why is it important for specific children and families?
    - Activities are connected to specific children and families in the group. This linking helps children understand holiday activities in the context of people’s daily lives. Children should have the chance to explore the meaning and significance of each holiday.
    - Both children and staff honor every group represented in the classroom. This respect does not require that every holiday of every group must be celebrated; otherwise, classrooms would be celebrating all the time! It does require, however, that none should be treated as though they were “unusual.” Children should recognize that everyone’s holidays are culturally significant and meaningful.
    - Activities demonstrate the fact that not everyone in the same ethnic group celebrates holidays in the same way. Families may provide examples of their own unique traditions.
    - Families and program staff work together to plan strategies for children whose families’ beliefs do not permit participation in holiday celebrations. Families should take part in creating satisfactory alternatives for the child within the classroom.
    - The focus is on meaningful ways to celebrate holidays without spending money. Families may find certain holidays stressful because of the amount of commercialization and media pressure to buy gifts. Teachers can help by showing children that homemade costumes and gifts are very special and that celebrating can be joyful without gifts.

### **Guidance for Birthday Recognition**

In order to make birthdays special for children celebrating a birthday and at the same time respecting children who do not celebrate, the guidance below will be followed:

- Teachers/CFEs learn about the children and families’ beliefs regarding birthday celebrations during the first home visit and use this information to help all children feel special, regardless of their cultural beliefs.
- Clayton Early Learning promotes healthy nutrition. When a birthday will be honored as a special occasion, Teachers/CFEs will decide how to honor the child’s special day with traditions other than the use of food (e.g., a special hat, scarf, vest, crown, button, etc.).

- Teachers/CFEs will plan developmentally appropriate ways for classmates to honor their friends without excluding anyone (e.g., a letter, card, or book made by classmates).
- No outside food will be served within the schools per federal regulations.

### **Guidance for Transition Celebration**

Clayton Early Learning year-end transition celebrations are designed to honor the completion of a child's educational experience through developmentally appropriate activities.

Activities planned with the children, families, and staff should focus on transition through the eyes of the child. These activities should help the child and the parent feel good about the child's growth and achievements. Young children's needs are better met in small informal group activities rather than staged events. The expectations of children must be realistic. Clayton does not incorporate the use of caps and gowns to celebrate transitions.

### **Nutritional Guidance for All Celebrations**

One of the primary goals of Clayton Early Learning is to ensure that well-balanced nutritious meals and snacks are served to children to help them learn to eat a wide variety of foods as part of a balanced diet. Food that is served to children during program operating hours must meet Child and Adult Care Food Program nutritional guidelines. Good nutrition is important to the health of infants, children, and adults. Foods served must be high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt.

*No outside food will be served within the school or home based socializations per federal regulations.*

## Arriving at the School

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### Hours of Operation

The core operational hours for the Clayton Early Learning school are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Parents receiving extended day services may have access to the school between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

To ensure safe loading and unloading, designated parking is available for parents, including several handicap parking spots. Please observe the laws regarding handicap parking and do not park in those identified spots without having a legal need to do so. The building is secured, and entry requires use of a unique security code, which is issued at enrollment and may change from time to time. Visitors must enter the building by ringing the doorbell at the main door.

The school is closed for periodic staff training and for special holidays which are listed on the parent calendar.

### The hours for program options are:

#### **Infants and Toddlers**

Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

#### **Preschool:**

Full Day – Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Extended Day – Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### Full Day Drop Off and Pick Up Time

Families must agree to set drop-off and pick-up times upon the child's enrollment, and adhere to those times consistently. Only adults eighteen years or older and approved by the parents on this agreement may drop off or pick up a child.

Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers thrive on predictable and consistent routines. Please note that inconsistent routines are especially problematic to children who experience separation anxiety. Individualized activities are planned during the daily routine, normally occurring at the beginning of the day when children are rested and alert. Timely arrival in the morning ensures your child can participate in these activities. Our suggested time of arrival is before 9:00 a.m.

For infants and toddlers, the needs of individual children and families are taken into consideration in determining the cut-off time for both arrival and pick up for a specific child. Parents and staff should consider the amount of time that infants and toddlers are in group care and if it is appropriate for the child.

If you arrive with your child and the child's class is on a walking excursion or field trip, you may either take your child to meet the group at the site of the field trip or check with the Managers of Education & Family Services, School Director, or designated staff, who will attempt to place your child in an age appropriate classroom, if space is available, until the return of his or her regular class. When accepting a child who arrives late, teachers will inform parents that they will monitor how the child transitions into the classroom. If there are difficulties with how a child transitions into the classroom, parents and teachers

will discuss adjustments to the child's routine at pick-up time. Adults dropping off or picking up a child after the agreed upon time must check in with the Manager of Education & Family Services or School Director. When late drop-offs or pick-ups become a pattern, and/or are disruptive to the class, they will be discussed with the parents, teachers, and Managers of Education & Family Services or School Director in order to resolve the issue. A late fee is charged for pick-ups after the scheduled pick-up time.

These are acceptable exceptions to the established drop off/pick up time:

- When parents call ahead if an emergency or unexpected situation arises
- When there is inclement weather
- When there are medical appointments, and the parent has notified the teacher and/or CFE in advance
- When it is not a pattern of chronic late drop off/pick up (more than one time per week)

### **What to Do Upon Arrival**

1. Sign your child in on the Arrival/Departure Sheet.
2. Families receiving CCCAP tuition assistance will need to check-in at the ATS computer. Failure to check in and confirm OR sign out and confirm may result in additional fees.
3. For infants and toddlers, complete the Two-way Parent/Child Communication form.
4. Communicate questions or concerns with the teacher.

### **Absences**

Refer to our illness policy in this handbook for special guidelines on when you should keep your child home from school. In order for your child to receive the full comprehensive benefits of our early education program, it is critical that your child attends school, home visits, and socializations regularly. Parents are instructed at the time of enrollment and during orientation to call the classroom or their Child Family Educator if their child will be absent from class, socialization, or miss a home visit. Families should contact their Child Family Educator regarding family emergencies or family vacations. Excused absences include the child receiving HS or EHS services elsewhere, cultural/religious observances, and child illness. All other absences are considered unexcused. When there is an unexplained absence or reason to be concerned about the child, parents or guardians will be called the first day of the absence to determine the reason the child was absent and be offered any needed assistance.

A child's space in full and extended-day options cannot be reserved if she or he will be absent for more than four days (unless Family Leave Request form has been pre-approved). She or he has shown a pattern of frequent absences (more than two per month) and all attempts at working with the family (including completion of an Attendance Plan of Action) have not resulted in the child's regular attendance. The Child Family Educator will discuss other program options with the family that may better meet the family's needs.

Clayton Early Learning will consider a child as resigned when one or more of the following occur:

- A family voluntarily withdraws a child from the program.
- The family moves outside of Clayton Early Learning's service area.



- The family does not bring their child to school for ten consecutive days after completion of the Attendance Plan of Action, and continued efforts to work with family to remove barriers to regular attendance have been exhausted.
- All attempts to contact the family have been unsuccessful.

### **Head Start Extended Day Services**

Parents who choose the extended-day program options and are eligible for *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)* or *Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)* services must meet and maintain the requirements to participate in the option. If parents do not meet or maintain the requirements of the extended-day options, they may be considered for enrollment, as available, or placed on the wait list in another program option. If a child is placed on a wait list, eligibility for Early Head Start or Head Start services may need to be redetermined. For additional information on CCCAP, please contact your CFE.

CCCAP Parent Fees are assessed by the county department of social services and are based on the number of family members and the family's gross income. Parent Fees are due to Clayton Early Learning on the 1st of each month and a family is considered 'past due' if the payment is not made at that time. In addition, the parent is responsible for any balances not paid by CCCAP. This includes if your child is absent for more than three days or if CCCAP is only paying part-time hours, while you receive full-time care. Parents are responsible for maintaining their authorization with CCCAP. If your authorization has expired, you will be required to pay tuition for services. If you fail to enter your daily sign-in and sign-out via ATS (and confirm daily entries as needed), you may be charged tuition for those days, in addition to your monthly parent fee.

## Departing the School

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### What to Do When Leaving for the Day

1. Sign out on the Classroom Arrival/Departure Sheet.
2. Collect your child's clothes and belongings.
3. Check child's cubby or file for communications from staff.
4. Families receiving CCCAP tuition assistance will need to check-out at the Attendance Tracking System (ATS).

### Authorized Pick Up

Children are released only to individuals eighteen years or older listed on the Emergency Contact form authorized by parents and/or guardians. Individuals listed, but not known to staff, are required to show valid photo identification (I.D.) Parents must inform staff when one of the listed people on the pick-up form will pick up their child. There is a place on the sign-in sheet to update any changes.

### Important Note

The school must have legal documentation in your child's file stating custody guidelines when families have specific legal custodial arrangements (e.g., custody and restraining orders, court orders). Only in an emergency can a parent/guardian verbally authorize a person to pick-up who is not designated on the pick-up form.

### Late Child Pick Up

Parents and guardians are responsible for promptly picking up their child at the end of their class at the agreed upon time. When a child is not picked up, Clayton Early Learning staff are to follow the outlined procedures to assure the safe continuous care of the child. If the child is not picked up, the teacher or Child Family Educator will attempt to contact the parents. If unable to contact the parents, the teacher or Child Family Educator will call designated individuals on the emergency contact card. Late child pick up will be addressed in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. A late fee will be assessed.
2. Designated staff have the discretion to call the *Denver Department of Human Services* thirty minutes after the end of class time or program closure if unable to reach anyone from your child's Emergency Contact card.
3. Families who are late more than once may be required to meet with designated staff to develop a back-up plan for pick up in case of future emergencies.
4. Habitual late pick-ups (more frequent than one time per week in any month) may result in additional interruptions in service.

### Withdrawal from the School

It is required that the parent notify the teacher and/or Child Family Educator two weeks prior to the date of the child leaving the program.

## **Interruption in Services**

When parents are unable to meet the financial, work, or educational requirements of the full or extended day program, services may be interrupted. The child may be transferred to available openings in other program options as eligible. The Child Family Educators will attempt to communicate in person with the parents as to the reason why they no longer qualify for the full or extended day program and give the parents other options available as well as qualification requirements for continuation in the program. Clayton Early Learning will consider a Head Start child as resigned when a child's family moves outside of Clayton Early Learning's service area.

## Your Child's Safety

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Your child's health and safety are the primary concerns of all Clayton Early Learning staff. The following are procedures for ensuring and protecting the health and safety of your child in the schools throughout the course of the day:

- The main entrance is locked, and you must key in your personal code on the security pad to enter the school. To ensure security of the building, please do not give out your code to your child or others not authorized for pick-up. Parents or other individuals picking up a child that requires assistance entering the building will be escorted to their destination by program staff.
- Staff greet you at arrival and/or departure, and parents, family members over the age of 18, or guardians sign children in or out on the designated form in the classroom.
- If there is reasonable suspicion that the adult designated to pick up your child is impaired by drug or alcohol use, your child will not be released into their care. The next prioritized person on your emergency contact list will be notified to pick up your child.
- Parents are responsible for supervising children at all times while the children are not in the care of Clayton Early Learning staff.
- Children are not to have access to technology without supervision from staff or families. All technologies are subject to filtering and monitoring procedures.

### **Procedure for Identifying Where Children are at all Times.**

Attendance is monitored throughout the day including when children are in the classroom, when they exit the classroom, and when they exit the school. Teachers keep attendance records with them at all times. Teachers complete face-to-name counts at times listed above. The school has fenced-in outdoor play environments and children can be seen at all times.

### **Building Security and Visitors to the School**

The school is a secure facility and maintains a record of all visitors that includes the date, the visitor's name and phone number, and the purpose of the visit. All visitors must enter the building by ringing the doorbell at the main door. Once your child is enrolled, you will receive a unique four-digit access code to enter the building. For security purposes, this code is not to be shared with others and will be changed from time to time. Each family should use their own code to enter the building. Parents or other individuals picking up a child that requires assistance entering the building will be escorted to their destination by program staff. As an added security precaution **DO NOT HOLD THE DOOR OPEN FOR OTHERS**. Staff and parents should utilize their door codes.

## Field Trips and Other Activities

Field trips must be properly planned and adequately supervised. Children must be 2½ years of age and older to participate in field trips other than walking excursions. Field trips should be scheduled well in advance. Planning includes completion of FIELD TRIP PARENT PERMISSION FORMS.

Specific objectives for each field trip are developed. Completed forms that reflect preparation, follow-up discussion, and activities to make each field trip a relevant cultural and educational activity, will be approved by the Manager of Education & Family Services or the School Director.

Parents should always be notified whenever children leave the schools for a field trip. All field trips should be placed on the monthly calendar. If a field trip is arranged after the monthly calendar has been sent home, a notice will be sent to all parents, and must be posted on the parent bulletin board in advance of the trip. Additionally, a sign should be posted on the door of your child's classroom indicating the children's whereabouts and time of return.

If you arrive after the class has left for the field trip, you may take your child to the field trip site or Clayton Early Learning will attempt to place your child in an appropriate alternative classroom. If space is unavailable, you will need to seek alternative childcare.

For field trips, there should be one adult for every four children. We welcome you to participate on the field trip; however, please make arrangements for your own transportation if there is insufficient room on the school bus. If a class does not have the necessary adult-child ratios, the field trip will be cancelled.

## Sibling Classroom Visits

Enrolled siblings in separate classrooms are allowed to visit each other in the younger child's classroom with both teachers' permission. The teacher will maintain staff-child ratios required by licensing during the sibling classroom visit. Older siblings not enrolled in the school may visit with proper documentation and supervision.

## Unexpected Situations and Emergencies

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### Inclement Weather

While Clayton closely monitors Denver Public Schools' (DPS) district-wide closures, Clayton makes closure decisions independent of the district. The decision is made as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration, among other factors, the weather forecasts (start and stop times), ability to clear parking lots and sidewalks on our campuses, road and bus stop conditions, wind and wind chill, and temperature.

School closing announcements are made on the following:

- Clayton Weather Line: 303.355.4411 x359
- Clayton Website: [www.claytonearlylearning.org](http://www.claytonearlylearning.org)
- Clayton Social Media: Facebook, Twitter
- local radio (850 KOA) and television news stations (Channels CW2 (KWGN), CBS4 (KCNC), 7NEWS (KMGH), 9NEWS (KUSA), FOX31 (KDVR)
- Text messages to your cell phone to notify you of closures: Text 'celparent' to 33222.

### Emergency Procedures

Fire, tornado and evacuation drills are practiced monthly at the school. If there is an actual emergency, staff will guide all children to a designated safe place. Staff will account for each child and adult, and comfort and aid will be provided as needed. Parents can find the location of their child by calling Clayton Early Learning, (303) 355-4411.

If it is necessary to close the campus, Educare Denver children will be available for pick up at the main auditorium unless instructed differently by incident command, a text message, or emergency personnel. Staff will make every attempt to contact parents in the event that the campus is evacuated.

### Incident and Accident Reports

All Clayton Early Learning employees are responsible for prevention, non-medical first aid, documentation, and notification of any incident, accident and/or injury involving any child under their supervision. School staff is responsible for learning and enforcing safety procedures. If an incident, accident, or injury occurs, school staff determine the status of the child and give care according to emergency and/or first aid procedures. This includes calling 911, if needed. The child's parents are notified of all incidents and called immediately if medical attention is needed. Emergency cards are updated quarterly. Referral for further non-emergency medical care should be made if needed. If the nurse determines a referral for medical care is indicated, the nurse makes the referral. Parents receive a copy of the *Incident/Accident Report Form*.

### School Day Illness

When you are notified that your child is ill during the school day, you will need to make arrangements to have your child picked up from the school within one hour. At that time, you may receive a referral form. Based on the information indicated on the referral, any medical follow-up indicated will be required prior to your child returning to school (see ILLNESS POLICY: WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME).

## Lost Children

Clayton Early Learning is committed to providing a safe environment and supervision of all children enrolled in the program.

- All children must be well supervised at all times by their responsible caregiver. If you have concerns that the classroom is difficult to supervise, the Managers of Education & Family Services, School Director and/or your Child Family Educator should be contacted to discuss concerns.
- Attendance is monitored throughout the day using a name-to-face method including when children are in the classroom, when they exit the classroom and school, and when they are outside the classroom. Teachers keep attendance records with them at all times. The school has fenced outdoor play environments and children can be seen at all times.
- Any time an authorized adult (e.g., Nurse, Child Family Educator, disabilities staff, etc.) takes a child out of the classroom, the teacher must be notified. An adult must stay with the child at all times.
- In the unlikely event a child is unaccounted for while in our care, we will conduct an immediate search and contact the parent and the authorities as needed.
- A Lost/Missing or Abducted Student Standard Operating Procedure is in place.

## Lost/Missing or Abducted Child

**A child is considered lost/missing when** a child cannot be located after they are known to have been signed into Clayton Early Learning or boarded a Clayton Early Learning bus or van.

Should the child be lost or missing, the following individuals are immediately notified:

- Director, School
- Managers of Education & Family Services
- Director, Human Resources
- Executive Team
- Emergency Preparedness Team

The School Director and the Managers of Education & Family Services will ensure that the following steps are taken:

- Conduct a thorough, immediate search of the premises, inside and outside.
- If the child is not located within a few minutes (five or less), call 911.
- Call the parent/guardian. Inform him/her of the circumstances; elicit information on where the child might go. Ask that someone remains at the home in case the child returns home.
- Provide a picture, if available, and full description of the student (age, height, weight, color of hair, eyes, and clothing) to assist Clayton staff and police.
- Maintain classroom routine for other students.
- Ask teacher/family engagement services team about any known concerns regarding the child/family.
- Provide support and assurance to the parents throughout the incident.

- Document all actions taken.
- When the student is found, contact all appropriate individuals.

**A child is considered abducted when** any person takes a student without proper authorization.

Should the child be taken from the school premises or a Clayton Early Learning field trip without proper authorization, the following people will be immediately notified:

- 911
- Director, School
- Managers of Education & Family Services
- Director, Human Resources
- Executive team
- Director, Maintenance
- Senior Director, Operations

The Director and the Managers of Education & Family Services will ensure that the following steps are taken:

- Describe the incident and the abductor: age, height, weight, color of hair and eyes, vehicle type and location, if applicable.
- Conduct immediate search of building and grounds.
- Identify witnesses and notify police for witness questioning.
- Provide a school picture (if available) and full description of the student (age, height, weight, color of hair, eyes, and clothing) to assist police.
- Contact the parents/guardians of the student involved and establish a communication plan with them.
- Move other students away from the area of the abduction.
- Maintain classroom routine for other students.
- Maintain a written account of the incident and actions taken.
- When the student is found, contact all appropriate individuals.



# The Food Program

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## General Information

Food service for Clayton Early Learning is served in a pleasant and relaxed mealtime atmosphere with developmentally appropriate furniture and eating utensils. To encourage independence and socialization, food is served family style where children and the teachers sit at the same table and share the same meal. The dining table is set with individual plates and flatware. Food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. An adult should be seated with the children during meal times because role modeling is essential to the development of their healthful eating habits and positive attitudes toward nutrition.

Children should be offered all foods and encouraged (in a friendly, non-directive manner) to take a serving and try the food. Children will never be forced to take a food they do not want and children are never required to eat more of a food than they want. Cycle menus are designed to offer the children a variety of foods which consider USDA Food Regulations, cultural, religious, and ethnic preferences, and broaden the child's food experience. Variations to the cycle menu are available only with a doctor's special diet statement.

The extended day program serves breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack following USDA nutritional and portion guidelines appropriate for the child's age. The full day classrooms receive breakfast and lunch. The home-based program receives breakfast or lunch on the day of their socializations.

## Breastfeeding and Bottle Feeding

If you wish to breastfeed your child, you are welcome to stay within the classroom or use our lactation station. Commercially prepared formula is mixed according to instructions and will be placed in a bottle marked with the child's name. All pre-mixed bottles of formula or breast milk are appropriately refrigerated. Program approved formulas are provided for families. Children between the ages of 1 year and 2 years of age are given whole milk once they no longer take formula or breast milk. Children over 2 years of age are given 1% milk. Other types of milk can only be given at this age under a physician's orders with parental permission.

## Special Situations

If your child has an allergy to foods, or is on a special diet, Clayton Early Learning will follow the information provided by their doctor's written special diet form. Special diets are served only upon instruction of the child's physician and upon the request of the parent.

## Food from Home

Clayton Early Learning follows procedures from the USDA food safety guidelines. These guidelines do not permit food from home to be brought to the school, stored, and/or served at any time during licensed childcare hours or when children are present.

## Daily Routines

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### Rest or Quiet Time

Clayton Early Learning provides a quiet rest or naptime for children during the day. Each classroom's daily schedule is posted on the parent board. Each child has his or her own crib, mat, futon, or cot. Many children will fall asleep during this time. Teaching teams encourage resting using calming and quieting techniques (e.g., soft music, dimming lights, and back rubs). Each child has his or her own special routine for relaxing. A labeled favorite blanket or toy sent from home may help older children (older than one year) to rest and relax. Classrooms with infants follow Safe Sleep procedures. Please see the safe sleep policy for more details. Written parent permission must be given for any child under two years of age to rest on a mat or futon. Infants sleep according to their own schedule to promote self-regulation.

### Safe Sleep Policy

Providing infants with a safe place to grow and learn is very important. For this reason, Clayton Early Learning has created a policy of safe sleep practices for infants up to 1-year-old. We follow the recommendations from American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission, as well as regulatory bodies, to provide a safe sleep environment and reduce the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). The staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Clayton Early Learning follow the safe sleep policy and receive annual training on safe sleep best practices. All families with children under one year are given the full safe sleep policy and futon permission form to read and sign. If you would like a copy, please speak with your Child Family Educator.

### Diapering

Clayton Early Learning staff is trained in proper diapering techniques that are posted at the changing areas in each infant/toddler classroom. Universal Precautions are used. These precautions, which guard against disease, require a change of disposable gloves, washing of child and caregiver hands, and sanitation of the area before and after the changing of each child. Diapers are provided for families receiving Head Start services.

### Toilet Training or Potty Learning

Staff will work with the child and family to provide guidance in toilet training or potty learning. When children develop an awareness of when they are dry and when they are wet or soiled and show an interest in using the toilet, those children may sit on the toilet when other children do. Hands will always be washed at these times. When children experience success in using the toilet and understand the connection between body functions and the toilet, they will gradually use the toilet on their own. If a child understands and is capable but is not willing, then the child is not completely ready to learn how to use the toilet and staff will work with the family to determine when the child is ready.

## Playing Outdoors

Clayton Early Learning follows the Federal Guidelines from “Caring for Our Children” for playing outdoors. Families are expected to dress their children appropriately for outdoor play. Clayton Early Learning does not have the teacher-child ratio support to allow for certain children to be kept inside during scheduled outdoor play so all children will be playing outdoors.

Children should play outdoors when the conditions do not pose any concerns to health and safety such as a significant risk of frostbite or heat-related illness. Caregivers/teachers must protect children from harm caused by adverse weather, ensuring that children wear appropriate clothing and/or appropriate shelter is provided for the weather conditions. Weather that poses a significant health risk includes wind chill factor below -15 degrees F (-26 degrees C) and heat index at or above 90 degrees F (32 degrees C), as identified by the National Weather Service (NWS).

Outdoor play is not only an opportunity for learning in a different environment, it also provides many health benefits. Outdoor play allows for physical activity that supports maintenance of health, weight, and better nighttime sleep. Short exposure of the skin to sunlight promotes the production of vitamin D that growing children require.

Please ensure that your child has weather appropriate clothing.

# Clothing and Belongings from Home

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## Clothing

Keep it simple. Dress for fun! Clayton Early Learning days are filled with all kinds of hands-on learning. Children should wear simple, washable clothing and comfortable shoes. Since our classroom extends to the outdoors, dress your child appropriately for the weather. Days at the schools are sometimes messy, so bring a change of clothes for your child, including pants, shirts, socks, and underwear. Make sure clothing is labeled, including jackets and coats. When the weather is sunny, and children play outside for an extended period of time, sunscreen is applied to those children who have signed parent permission forms. Living in Colorado often brings many different weather conditions in a single day. We recommend parents pack their child's backpack with extra clothes that will keep your child comfortable if the weather changes. If parents are unable to provide an extra set of clothes, they can speak to their Child Family Educator for assistance.

## Children's Belongings – Diaper Bags and Backpacks

The Clayton Early Learning School has individual cubbies where children store their personal belongings. Toys, candy, money, medications, lotions, creams, and other items that must not be accessible to children are not permitted. Please make sure ALL clothing and personal possessions are labeled with your child's name. Children may need to bring a blanket, a special object or toy for rest time. All items brought to school should fit in their cubby, backpack, or diaper bag. This helps to meet Health Department regulations about children's belongings and proper placement of these items.

- **For Infants (under 18 months)** We suggest you bring at least two changes of clothing and a pacifier (if child desires). Any special powders, ointments, or medications with a doctor's statement as to why it is needed and instructions for proper application, and any labeled bottles of formula or breast milk must be given to the teacher at drop-off.
- **For Toddlers (over 18 months)** We suggest you bring at least two changes of clothing, a blanket or comfort item, any special powders, ointments, or medications with a doctor's permission statement as to why it is needed and instructions for proper application must be given to the teacher at drop-off. If your child is toilet learning, to support their process please bring extra clothing in a plastic bag and label it with your child's name.
- **For Preschoolers.** We suggest you bring at least two changes of clothing and a blanket or comfort item. If your child is toilet learning, to support their process bring extra clothing in a plastic bag labeled with your child's name.

## Laundry Policy

The school staff will be responsible for laundering sheets for the cribs, mats, or futons routinely. Per regulations of the State Health Department, parents are responsible for washing wet and/or soiled clothing. These items will be put in a marked plastic bag for parents to take home.

## Promoting and Protecting Your Child's Health

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### Administering Medication

Over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol, cough medicine, diaper cream, and rash/eczema products are given at Clayton Early Learning only with parent and physician permission. If prescription medication needs to be given at school by the health team or a staff person trained in medication delegation by a Registered Nurse, medication must be in the original prescription container. The parent must sign a medication administration form, and provide a written authorization from the physician. The parent must give the medication directly to a staff person designated to accept medication.

A medication administration record will be maintained by the teachers delegated to administer medication. Medication is stored out of the reach of children in a locked container. If refrigeration is required, the medication will be stored in a locked container in the refrigerator.

### Well Child Examinations and Screenings

Clayton Early Learning emphasizes the importance of early identification of health problems. A periodic physical exam according to the *Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic Testing (EPSDT) Medicaid* schedule and a dental screening are required for each child in the program. The parent/guardian must submit a statement of the child's current health status signed and dated by an approved health care professional and a record of all immunizations received in order to meet licensing regulations.

### Immunizations

At the time of enrollment, information must be obtained regarding all immunizations a child has had, including the dates that each immunization was given. If immunizations are not given due to medical, personal, or religious reasons, the appropriate exemption found on the back of the *Certificate of Immunization* must be signed and dated by the parents. If one child in the school is not immunized, parents in the program must be notified that the risk of a spread of a preventable disease exists, while maintaining individual child confidentiality. Both well-child exams and immunizations must be current according to the *EPSDT* schedule for entry to the school and to avoid any subsequent interruption of childcare.

### Special Health Requirements

At the time of enrollment, Clayton Early Learning must obtain any information on special health needs for each child, including any known allergies, current medications, special diets, or any chronic health conditions. Information and instruction regarding the care of each child who has an identified health condition or developmental concern, such as seizures, asthma, diabetes, allergies, heart or respiratory conditions, and physical disabilities, must be provided by the parents and health care provider. Current medication administration forms and current medications must be onsite for the child to attend school. Together, the parents and the health team will develop a health care plan so that the teaching staff is informed and able to provide the best care for your child.

## Illness Policy: When to Keep Your Child At Home

**There are three main reasons to keep sick children at home:**

1. The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in usual activities (such as extreme signs of tiredness, unexplained irritability or persistent crying).
2. The child requires more care than program staff is able to provide, without affecting the health and safety of the other children.
3. The illness is on the list of symptoms or illness for which exclusion is recommended.
4. The child has symptoms, or an illness is on this list, and staying home is required.

*The best way to prevent the spread of infection is by practicing good hand washing.*

**Children with the following symptoms or illness should be excluded from school:**

SYMPTOMS	Must My Child be Kept at Home?
<p><b>DIARRHEA</b> frequent, loose or watery stools compared to child's normal pattern; not caused by diet or medication</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> - if child looks or acts ill; if child has diarrhea with fever and behavior change; if child has diarrhea with vomiting; if child has diarrhea that is not contained in the diaper or the toilet, within a 24-hour period</p>
<p><b>FEVER</b> with behavior changes or illness <u>Note:</u> An unexplained temperature of 100°F or above is significant in infants 4 months of age or younger and requires immediate medical attention.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> - when fever is accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms of illness, such as rash, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, behavior changes, stiff neck, difficulty breathing, etc.</p>
<p><b>"FLU-LIKE" SYMPTOMS</b> Fever over 100°F with a cough or sore throat. Other flu symptoms can include fatigue, body aches, vomiting and diarrhea</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> - for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine</p>
<p><b>COUGHING</b> <u>Note:</u> Children with asthma may be cared for in school with a written health care plan and authorization for medication/treatment</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> - if severe, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, rapid or difficulty breathing and medical attention is necessary</p>
<p><b>MILD RESPIRATORY OR COLD SYMPTOMS</b> stuffy nose with clear drainage, sneezing, mild cough</p>	<p><b>No</b> - may attend if able to participate in school activities <i>EXCLUDE if symptoms are severe. This includes fever accompanied by behavior changes and/or difficulty breathing.</i></p>
<p><b>RASH WITH FEVER</b> <u>Note:</u> Body rash without fever or behavior changes usually does not require exclusion from school, seek medical advice</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> - seek medical advice. Any rash that spreads quickly, has open, weeping wounds and/or is not healing should be evaluated</p>
<p><b>VOMITING</b> two or more episodes of vomiting in the past 24 hrs</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> - until vomiting resolves or a health care provider decides it is not contagious. If the child has a recent head injury observe for other signs of illness and for dehydration</p>

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<b>CHICKEN POX</b>	<b>Yes</b> - until blisters have dried and crusted (usually 6 days) If blister occurs after vaccination, refer to Health Dept Guidelines
<b>CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE) OR</b> pink color of eye <i>and</i> thick yellow/green discharge	<b>No (bacterial or viral)</b> – children do not need to be excluded unless the child meets other exclusion criteria, such as fever or behavioral change. Consult a health professional for diagnosis and possible treatment.
<b>CROUP (SEE COUGHING)</b> <u>Note:</u> May not need to be excluded unless child is not well enough to participate in usual activities	Seek medical advice
<b>FIFTH'S DISEASE</b>	<b>No</b> - child is no longer contagious once rash appears
<b>HAND FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE</b> (Coxsackie virus)	<b>No</b> - may attend if able to participate in usual activities, unless the child has mouth sores and is drooling
<b>HEAD LICE OR SCABIES</b>	<b>Yes</b> - from end of the school day until after first treatment.
<b>HEPATITIS A</b>	<b>Yes</b> - until 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice and when able to participate in usual activities
<b>HERPES</b>	<b>Not necessary unless the student has open sores and is drooling uncontrollably. Yes</b> - if area is oozing and cannot be covered, such as mouth sores
<b>IMPETIGO</b>	<b>Yes</b> - for 24 hours after antibiotic treatment starts
<b>RINGWORM</b>	<b>Yes</b> - from the end of school until after first treatment starts. Keep area covered for the first 48 hrs. of treatment
<b>ROSEOLA</b>	<b>Yes</b> - seek medical advice. Exclusion not necessary unless the child has a fever along with the rash
<b>RSV</b> (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	Exclusion is not necessary but is recommended when a child is not well enough to participate in usual activities and/or is experiencing acute respiratory symptoms. Stay home and seek medical advice. Once a child in the group has been infected, spread of illness is rapid.
<b>STREP THROAT</b>	<b>Yes</b> - for 24 hours after antibiotic treatment and the child is able to participate in usual activities
<b>VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES</b> Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	<b>Yes</b> - until determined not contagious by health care provider
<b>YEAST INFECTIONS</b> including thrush or Candida diaper rash	<b>No</b> - may attend if able to participate in school activities Follow good hand washing and hygiene practices
<b>Other</b> Symptoms or illnesses not listed	Contact the child care center director or school health staff to see if the child or staff member needs to stay home (see Infectious Disease Guidelines).

**COVID-19 symptoms which must be *fully resolved* before a child or staff member returns to school**

- **Feeling Feverish, having chills or Fever** (Temperature of 100.4°F or greater. Babies who are 4 months or younger need to see a doctor right away for a fever of 100°F or higher)
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- **Nausea, Vomiting/Throwing Up**
- **Diarrhea** (Frequent, loose, or watery stools (poop) compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine)
- **Cough\***

**Yes** – These symptoms are often present in individuals with COVID-19 and other contagious infectious disease, and a person with any of these symptoms (whether new or worsening from baseline) should first receive a diagnostic test for COVID-19.

**When to seek emergency medical attention**

- **Trouble breathing**
- **Persistent pain or pressure in the chest**
- **New confusion**
- **Inability to wake or stay awake**
- **Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips or nail beds, depending on skin tone**

These are not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility. Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

If all symptoms are consistent with the usual symptoms of a known chronic condition and the child is otherwise well enough to return to school, no further evaluation is necessary.

If the test is positive, or the individual has not yet been tested, the individual should follow CDPHE’s isolation guidance, <https://covid19.colorado.gov/isolation-and-quarantine>. Further guidance for the school or child care can be found at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/practical-guide-for-operationalizing-cdc-school-guidance>.

If the test is negative AND the symptoms are explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.

If the test is negative and the illness is not explained by a new illness or a known chronic condition, the ill individual should still stay home until symptoms have been resolved for at least 24 hours without medication.

\*Students and staff may return if the cough is not fully resolved following discussion with a care provider.



<p><b>COVID-19 symptoms which <i>must be improving</i> before a child or staff member returns to school or child care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sore throat</li> <li>● Runny nose or congestion</li> <li>● Muscle or body aches</li> <li>● Headache</li> <li>● Fatigue</li> <li>● New Loss of Taste or Smell**</li> </ul>	<p><b>Yes</b> – These symptoms are often present in individuals with COVID-19, and a person with any of these symptoms (whether new or worsening from baseline) should receive a diagnostic test for COVID-19. If all symptoms are consistent with the usual symptoms of a known chronic condition and the child is otherwise well enough to return to school, no further evaluation is necessary.</p> <p>If the diagnostic COVID test is positive, or the individual has not yet been tested, the individual should follow CDPHE's isolation guidance, <a href="https://covid19.colorado.gov/isolation-and-quarantine">https://covid19.colorado.gov/isolation-and-quarantine</a>. Further guidance can be found at <a href="https://covid19.colorado.gov/practical-guide-for-operationalizing-cdc-school-guidance">https://covid19.colorado.gov/practical-guide-for-operationalizing-cdc-school-guidance</a>.</p> <p>If the diagnostic test is negative and the symptoms are explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>If the COVID test is negative and the illness is <b>not</b> explained by a new illness or a known chronic condition, the ill individual may return to school as long as all symptoms are improving and cough, shortness of breath, fever, diarrhea and vomiting have fully resolved.</p> <p>**Loss of taste or smell can persist for weeks or months. This condition does not need to be resolved or improving before an individual returns to school or care.</p>
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References

- American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2011. Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs. 3rd edition. Elk Grove Village, IL.
- American Academy of Pediatrics, *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools*, Elk Grove Village, IL 2009.
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program, *Infectious Disease in Child Care Settings: Guidelines for Schools and Child Care Providers*, Denver, CO., November 2012.

## Important Phone Numbers to Remember

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Clayton Early Learning.....	303-355-4411
Educare Denver Fax.....	303-355-3718
Help Desk – Educare.....	X313
Chief Program Officer.....	X420
Director, School .....	X212
Admissions Specialist.....	X432
Early Intervention Specialist.....	X205
Manager of Family Services.....	X307
Director, Community Partnerships.....	X430
Director of Continuous Learning & Data.....	X236
Director of Comprehensive Services .....	X279
Health Records.....	X272
Child Care Licensing.....	303-866-5958
1575 Sherman Street, Denver, Colorado 80203-1714	

### Educare Denver Classrooms

Room 123.....	X123
Room 128.....	X128
Room 129 .....	X129
Room 134 .....	X134
Room 136 .....	X136
Room 139 .....	X139
Room 140 .....	X140
Room 146.....	X146
Room 166 .....	X166
Room 172 .....	X172
Room 173 .....	X173
Room 177 .....	X177
Room 178 .....	X178
Room 182 .....	X182
Room 183 .....	X183
Room 188.....	X188



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