

Clayton Early Learning Family Handbook

2025-2026



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Who We Are

Clayton Early Learning promotes educational success through a powerful and unique model that harnesses the synergy of early childhood education practice, family engagement, and professional development. Clayton Early Learning is home to a community of learners encompassing staff, children, and families. Our work supporting young children ages birth to five and their families is guided by evidence-based best practices from the field of early childhood education research.

Our model is unique because we aim to improve outcomes not only for the children we directly serve, but for their families as well as the education community at large. We do this by:

- Providing high quality services to the children and families enrolled in our programs
- Collaborating with others in the early childhood education community to share ideas, innovative practices, and lessons learned about how best to serve children and families

As a result, you may find that Clayton Early Learning is different from other programs. Our approach includes assessing program quality on an ongoing basis through information gathering and reflective practice. Staff from other early childhood programs, as well as college students preparing for a career in early childhood education, will come to our program to observe what we do. Families enrolled in our programs may be invited to participate in research projects in collaboration with community agencies and universities. These efforts are all focused on gathering information that will contribute to the field of early childhood education and improve the work we do with families.

Welcome to Our Head Start Family!

All Clayton Early Learning school-based, home-based, and community-based programs are Head Start programs. ***Head Start is a federally funded program that promotes school readiness for children from birth to age five by offering educational, health, nutritional, and family support services—at no cost to eligible families.*** Being part of our Early Head Start and Head Start program means joining a supportive community committed to your child's growth, learning, and well-being.

Our program focuses on the whole child and whole family, recognizing caregivers as their child's first and most important teacher. We provide safe, nurturing environments where children can learn through play, build relationships, and develop the skills they need for lifelong success. ***Together, we partner with families to set goals, celebrate progress, and ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive!***

Our Values

At Clayton Early Learning, we believe our core values help drive actions and create habits that allow our belief in the unlimited potential of young children to become a reality. We see these values in action every day as they strengthen our Clayton community and our work with the children, families, and educators we serve.

- **Community** fosters belonging, resiliency, stability, and strength. We are committed to creating a caring, supportive, professional community at Clayton and we are committed to being a positive member of the many communities we partner with and serve.
- **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.
- **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 program practices to reflect new learning and to meet changing needs.
- **Stewardship** enables us to have the greatest impact we can with the resources we have. We are committed to being good stewards of 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 by treating each other with respect and responsibility.
- **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.

Program Options & Curriculums

At Clayton Early Learning, children aged five years old grow and learn in state-of-the-art environments to enter kindergarten prepared for academic success. Our practices with children and families are research-based and outcome-focused to support school readiness for all children.

Clayton Early Learning has adopted a curriculum model designed to meet the following definition of **curriculum** as a written plan that includes:

- The goals for children’s development and learning
- The instructional activities and experiences through which they will achieve these goals
- What staff and caregivers do to help children achieve these goals
- The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum (Head Start Performance Standard 1304.3(a)(5))
- Ongoing assessment and screening to guide planning for each individual child

Clayton offers a variety of programming options and curricular approaches to meet family and child needs. During the enrollment process, families complete enrollment materials and submit documentation as required for their chosen program option. These documentation requirements are based on Early Head Start and/or Head Start regulations, as well as licensing regulations. A meet and greet event is held at the beginning of each program year on Clayton’s campus at the Educare school and Home-based socialization classrooms. Families can meet Clayton staff and familiarize themselves with the campus during this event. Details for each program option can be found below.

School-based Program Option

Clayton Early Learning provides licensed, high-quality early childhood education in our Educare school on Clayton’s campus at 3751 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd in Denver. For all children in extended day and full day classrooms, teachers make two home visits and have two family-staff conferences per year. Child Family Educators also meet monthly with families and teachers to ensure a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach that best meets the needs of children and families.

- Extended Day (7:30 am – 5:00 pm)
 - Children ages 6 weeks – five years
 - Financial assistance may be available through the *Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)* and/or *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*
 - Aligns with a year-round schedule

- Full Day (8:00 am – 2:30 pm)
 - Children ages three to five years
 - Financial assistance may be available through *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families* (TANF)
 - Aligns with a nine-month school year (September – May)

All classrooms in our Educare school use [The Creative Curriculum](#) and [Conscious Discipline](#) from birth to five years of age.

[Home-based Program Option](#)

Clayton Early Learning provides a home visitation option for income eligible children ages birth to five years old and their families. Through weekly 90-minute home visits, the Child Family Educator works with families to build strong relationships that provide education and support to achieve family goals. The home environment is used to create rich learning opportunities that build upon everyday routines and support the child's growth and development, ensuring a successful learning experience through the family and child working together. All home-based services include twice monthly socializations/field trips (if age appropriate), as well as family meetings.

Home-based programming for birth to three years old spans twelve months and uses [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 expecting and parenting families.

Home-based programming for children ages three to five years old aligns with a nine-month school year (September – May) and uses the [Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters](#) (HIPPY) curriculum. Based on the belief that caregivers play a critical role as their child's first teacher, this family focused curriculum helps caregivers provide educational experiences that support school readiness for their child.

[Prenatal Program Option](#)

Prenatal and postpartum services are available for eligible pregnant women. We provide prenatal education, including health and nutrition education, using the [Partners for a Healthy Baby](#) curriculum. We also support prenatal mothers in accessing medical and dental services in the community. The program consists of a weekly visit with the Child Family Educator and a visit once per trimester with the health team. Educational information, connections to community services, and screening in health, nutrition, and mental health are the focus for the postpartum mother and newborn.

[Play & Learn Program Option](#)

Caregivers and their children ages birth to three years old attend sessions twice per week at [Denver Public Schools Community Hubs](#) in the Denver metro area 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 their child in ways that support the child's learning and development, as well as to connect with other caregivers. These caregiver-child interactions are supported through the *Learning Through Relating Curriculum* and [Dialogic Reading](#). Families must qualify and enroll in Play and Learn through Denver Public Schools.

[Community-based Program Option](#)

Clayton Early Learning collaborates with community childcare programs to offer caregivers additional locations to choose from for their child's early learning experiences. Services are available for income-eligible families in community childcare programs operated by:

- Venture for Success Preparatory Learning Center
- Little Folks Learning Center
- Little Einstein's Academy
- Catholic Charities of Denver
- Florence Crittenton Early Learning Center
- Early Success Academy

The child's teacher makes two home visits and conducts two family-staff conferences per year. Child Family Educators work in partnership with the community programs to ensure Early Head Start and Head Start services are provided to enrolled children and families. Each family receives a family handbook and can attend an orientation session for the site where they are enrolled.

Wraparound Support Services

Clayton Early Learning offers a unique model of wraparound services to support children and families in a holistic manner. Through ongoing collaboration between families and staff, any developmental or health concerns for children are identified. Families are then connected with sources of continuous accessible care and services to meet their needs. These services are part of each program option offered.

Child Development

At Clayton Early Learning, we offer a variety of age-appropriate learning experiences that support children's overall development. We individualize your child's learning plan to support his or her growth and make adaptations based on needs. Teachers and Child Family Educators also provide information to families on child development and parenting.

Ongoing observations and assessments are used to assist families and staff in setting goals for children. Services available to all children include developmental screening, assisting in referrals for evaluation, and helping you to arrange services for special needs indicated during the evaluations. You or your Child Family Educator may request a referral to receive additional services from specialists. We believe enrolling children with special needs services in the program is an enriching experience for all children and staff. A minimum of 10% of Clayton Early Learning's total enrollment is available to children with special needs services.

Physical Health

Preventive health care and early detection of any health problems are vital to a child's healthy growth and development. Clayton's health team works with families, teachers, and Child Family Educators to support children in receiving preventive health care services according to the [Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment \(EPSDT\)](#) Medicaid schedule.

These **required** services include:

- **Well-child exams:** The parent or guardian must submit a statement of the child's current health status signed and dated by an approved health care professional within 30 days of a child's enrollment date and annually thereafter.
- **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, families must complete the Medical or Non-Medical Immunization Exemption Certificate.

- **Dental screenings:** Clayton Early Learning partners with [Denver Health](#) to offer dental screenings for all enrolled children during regular business hours at our Educare school throughout the program year. If caregivers or guardians choose not to have their child screened through Clayton, they will be asked to periodically submit up-to-date screening documentation signed and dated by a health care professional instead. Families can also access Denver Health's [school based dental clinics](#) throughout the Denver Metro area for pediatric dental services. Dental screening services and documentation must be received within 90 days of a child's enrollment date.
- **Hearing and vision screenings:** Clayton Early Learning partners with the [Marion Downs Center](#) to offer free hearing and vision screenings for all enrolled children during regular business hours at our Educare school throughout the program year. If caregivers or guardians choose not to have their child screened through Clayton, they will be asked to periodically submit up-to-date screening documentation signed and dated by a health care professional instead. Hearing and vision screening services and documentation must be received within 45 days of a child's enrollment date.

At the time of enrollment, Clayton Early Learning must obtain 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 caregivers and health care provider.

In partnership with families, Clayton staff also conduct regular nutritional screenings to support the development of healthy eating habits for children and caregivers. If needed or desired, a registered dietician is available for consultation.

[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. Clayton staff, including a licensed mental health consultant, are available to help with problem solving and resource referrals. Referrals can include licensed mental health clinicians who assist with developing strategies that support the social and emotional needs of children, as well as with connecting families to relevant social and emotional support through individual consultations, family workshops, and family support groups.

[Family Partnerships](#)

Child Family Educators work collaboratively with families to identify goals through the Family Partnership Agreement. This agreement describes the goals for your family, specifies the resources available, and identifies the services needed to reach your goals. Your Child Family Educator will help you locate and access desired community resources. 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 classes, nutrition classes, and literacy-focused training are offered onsite by Clayton Early Learning staff to assist you in reaching your goals.

[Community Partners](#)

Clayton Early Learning partners with many community agencies to provide resources such as health care, mental health services, early intervention services, training and education, community events, and learning activities for families. The Head Start Health Services Advisory Committee (which includes professionals, families, and volunteers from the community) meet regularly to ensure comprehensive services are available. Kindergarten transition services are also supported through collaborative relationships and agreements between our school and those you may be considering for your child's ongoing school experience. Your Child Family Educator can assist you in locating and accessing the services needed.

Family Involvement at Clayton

Your participation in Clayton Early Learning's programs is highly valued and supports our community. We strive to engage in open two-way communication with Clayton families regarding children's progress and family needs, as well as to provide opportunities for families to become involved with their child's education and development. We also offer educational workshops and training for caregivers and caregiving adults throughout the year. These opportunities can teach new skills and provide information about interesting, useful topics. More information about these opportunities and how to access them can be found below.

[Family-Staff Conferences and Home Visits](#)

Families in all program options are expected to participate in family-staff conferences and home visits during the program year. (See *Program Options and Curriculums* for more information about expectations specific to the program you and your child are enrolled in.) These conferences and visits are designed to provide families and staff with opportunities to connect, build relationships, celebrate successes, and identify areas where more support is needed.

[Family Meetings and Events](#)

Clayton Early Learning provides a variety of opportunities for families to connect with and communicate with one another. Regularly scheduled family meetings and socializations provide families with an opportunity to connect to your child's curriculum, meet other families, receive information about Clayton activities, provide feedback and explore your areas of interest, and participate in activities with your child. Translation services and refreshments are provided.

Quarterly all-Clayton events also provide a forum for families to engage in hands-on activities with their children and connect with other Clayton families and staff.

[Parent Committee](#)

The Parent Committee is open to all Clayton Early Learning families. The Committee meets monthly to plan, coordinate, and organize ongoing parental activities with the assistance of staff. Parent Committee members elect their own officers who conduct committee business and plan the quarterly all-Clayton events. Translation services are provided during all meetings.

[Policy Council and Policy Committee](#)

Policy Council and Policy Committee serve as forums for shared governance over the early childhood education programs being offered. Both groups consist of family members, Clayton Early Learning board members, and community representatives. Members initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvement, encourage family participation in programs, and work in partnership to develop, review, and approve or disapprove policies, procedures, grants, funding requests, and personnel matters (e.g., new staff hires and terminations).

Policy Council and Policy Committee membership is based upon the program that the children of families participate in:

- Policy Council – Early Head Start (families and children ages birth to two years old)
- Policy Committee – Head Start (families and children ages three to five years old)

Elections are held annually, and representatives can hold offices for a maximum period of three years. Letters are sent in the fall of each year to every family informing them of the election process and membership responsibilities. Interested families complete a form stating their interest in running for office. Ballots are cast at voting tables in the school or directly through home-based Child Family Educators.

Once elected, the Policy Council and Policy Committee members elect their own officers who conduct business and lead the members through decision-making processes. Both groups meet on the first Thursday of each month from 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm at the Educare Denver school. Dinner, childcare, transportation, and translation services are provided for members during all meetings.

[Fatherhood Program](#)

The fatherhood program is open to any male caregiver at Clayton Early Learning – fathers, stepfathers, uncles, grandfathers, etc. This program provides a monthly space to connect with other males and support one another in building healthy, thriving families. Our fatherhood program uses the [Nurturing Fathers](#) curriculum and covers topics such as positive behavior management, effective communication, conflict resolution, and successful co-parenting.

Volunteer Opportunities for Families

We invite all caregivers to make a commitment to volunteering for at least eight (8) hours per program year to support our community. There are several ways in which your time and talents can be helpful and useful to the program. While some of the opportunities listed take place during regular business hours, there are others that can be done on a flexible schedule to accommodate work schedules and other commitments you might have. Volunteer interest forms can be completed on Clayton's website, or you can talk with your Child Family Educator for more information.

Please note that anyone working directly with children will need to meet certain background check and brief training requirements. Our staff will assist you throughout this process. Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age.

- **Educare School** - Reading to children in our classrooms, delivering and picking up meals to/from classrooms, providing classroom support while teachers take a lunch break, assist classroom teachers with preparing materials for classroom activities, etc.
- **All Clayton Family Events** – Assist with quarterly events by facilitating an activity, creating decorations or flyers, assist with set-up or tear-down, spread the word to other Clayton families and encourage them to attend, etc.
- **Field trips** – Assist classroom teachers or home visitors on field trips to ensure a smooth and fun educational experience for children
- **Recruitment events** – Attend recruitment events with Clayton staff, talk about your experiences at Clayton to families in the community who may benefit from our services
- **Clayton Cares Market** - Stocking shelves and organizing donated food items, assisting guests as they shop for their groceries, sorting and packaging produce and pantry staples
- **Campus Beautification & Grounds Work** - Raking leaves and maintaining garden beds, trash pickup around major intersections, supporting seasonal cleanup and improvement projects

Communication between Families and Staff

Clayton uses digital platforms to facilitate accessible communication with families. Families are enrolled in both platforms, School Messenger and ReachWell, during enrollment in their preferred program option.

- **School Messenger** is used for emergency communications related to happenings on campus, such as lockdowns or evacuations. If needed, important instructions about reunification with children will be included in these communications.
- **ReachWell** is used for day-to-day communications about events, educational opportunities, and resources such as including monthly calendars, flyers, and newsletters. In addition, families can text chat directly with their teachers and Child Family Educator through the ReachWell app. All communications are automatically translated according to settings chosen when setting up the app.

In addition to digital communications, families should feel free to discuss any questions or concerns with their Child Family Educator or their child's teachers, as most issues can be resolved at this level. If an issue cannot be resolved, families are encouraged to take the concern to an Education Manager or Family Engagement Manager. If an issue cannot be resolved at the management level, families are encouraged to take the concern to the Director of Early Childhood or the Director of Family Engagement. Please refer to the ***Important Phone Numbers*** section at the end of this handbook for contact information.

Parent / Guardian Rights and Responsibilities

As a Clayton Early Learning family, you have the right to:

- Receive information about all aspects of the program communicated to you in a language you can understand
- Visit or observe your child during program activities
- Ask questions and offer constructive 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, program policies, or procedures within 48 hours

As a Clayton Early Learning family, you have the responsibility to:

- Read and understand this handbook; adhere to its guidelines and procedures
- Approach and speak to Clayton staff respectfully as professionals who work with you to provide a quality early childhood education program; threats and aggressive behavior will not be tolerated
- Approach and speak to other Clayton families and children respectfully as members of our Clayton community; threats and aggressive behavior will not be tolerated
- Ensure the program has current emergency contact information for your family with up-to-date home, work, and cell phone numbers
- Ensure the program has up-to-date documentation regarding your child's immunization and well child exam records; disclose essential information about the care of your child with staff
- Raise issues promptly, seeking mutually agreeable solutions that honor the needs of the organization and your family
- Support an individualized curriculum plan for your child by participating in goal setting, family-staff conferences, family meetings, home visits, and other program activities as needed
- Meet with your Child Family Educator (CFE) regularly to review family goals, progress, discuss family needs, and celebrate accomplishments

- Maintain 85% attendance as required for your program option

Safety Procedures

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 while attending Clayton programs.

- Buildings on our campus are secure; staff will accompany you on arrival and departure.
- Caregivers are responsible for supervising children at all times while the children are not in the care of Clayton Early Learning staff.
- 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.
- Children are not to have access to technology without supervision from staff or families. All technologies are subject to filtering and monitoring procedures.

Incllement 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 early as possible, taking factors into consideration such as the weather forecasts (start and stop times), the 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
- Clayton Social Media: Facebook, Twitter
- ReachWell (see ***Communication between Families and Staff*** for more information)
- Local radio and television news stations

Emergency Procedures

Fire, tornado and evacuation drills are practiced monthly on campus. 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. Caregivers can find the location of their child by calling Clayton Early Learning at (303) 355-4411.

If it is necessary to close the campus, emergency communications will be sent out to all families and include alternate plans for picking up their children. Staff will make every attempt to contact caregivers if the campus is evacuated.

Injury / Accident Prevention and Reporting

All Clayton Early Learning employees are responsible for accident/injury prevention, non-medical first aid, documentation, and notification of any incident involving any child under their supervision. Staff are also responsible for learning and enforcing safety procedures. If an incident, accident, or injury occurs, 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 caregivers 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. Caregivers receive a copy of the Incident/Accident Report Form.

Lost, Missing, Or Abducted Children

Attendance is monitored throughout daily activities 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 always keep attendance records with them. Outdoor play environments on campus are fenced in, and children can always be seen. 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 always stay with the 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 of Early Childhood
 - Education Managers
 - Family Engagement Director
 - Senior Director, Human Resources
 - Executive Team
 - Emergency Preparedness Team

- The Director of Early Childhood and Education Managers will ensure the following steps are taken:
 - Conduct a thorough, immediate search of the premises both inside and outside.
 - If the child is not located within five minutes 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 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 the child's teacher and Child Family Educator about any known concerns regarding the child or family.
- Provide support and assurance to the caregivers throughout the incident.
- Document all actions taken.
- When the child 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:
 - 9-1-1
 - Director of Early Childhood
 - Education Managers
 - Family Engagement Director
 - Senior Director, Human Resources
 - Executive team
 - Operations and Facilities Director
- The Director of Early Childhood and Education Managers 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 buildings 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 caregivers/guardians of the child involved and establish a communication plan with them.
 - Move other children away from the area of the abduction.
 - Maintain classroom routine for other children.
 - Maintain a written account of the incident and actions taken.
 - When the child is found, contact all appropriate individuals.

Attendance and Absence Guidelines

To ensure you and your child receive the full comprehensive benefits of our early education program, ***it is critical that your child attends school, socializations, and home visits consistently based on the requirements for your chosen program option.*** We ask that families call classroom teachers or their Child Family Educator if their child will be absent from class, a socialization, or a home visit. Families should also contact their Child Family Educator regarding family emergencies or family vacations. Excused absence reasons include the child receiving HS or EHS services elsewhere, 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, staff will contact caregivers or guardians to determine the reason the child was absent and offer any assistance needed.

A child's slot in school-based program options cannot be reserved if she or he is absent for more than four days (unless a Family Leave Request form has been pre-approved), has a pattern of frequent absences (more than two per month), or staff 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 with two weeks' advance notice
- The family moves outside of Clayton Early Learning's service area (Denver County)
- 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 the family to remove barriers to regular attendance have been exhausted
- All attempts by Clayton staff to contact the family have been unsuccessful

Important Phone Numbers

- Clayton Early Learning: (303) 355-4411
- Educare Director of Early Childhood: (303) 355-4411
- Family Engagement Director: (303) 355-4411
- Comprehensive Services Director: (720) 970-2397
- Community Partnerships Director: (720) 970-2485
- Admissions Manager: (720) 970-2449
- Child Care Licensing: (303) 866-5948

Educare School Operations

Hours of Operation

The core operational hours for Clayton Early Learning’s campus are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times at our Educare school generally run according to program option:

- Infant/Toddler Extended Day Classrooms – 7:30 am – 5:00 pm
- Preschool Extended Day Classrooms – 7:30 am – 5:00 pm
- Preschool Full Day Classrooms – 8:00 am – 2:30 pm

In some cases, drop-off and pick-up times may differ depending on the family’s or child’s unique situation. ***In all cases, families should drop off and pick up their child at consistent times.*** Children of all ages thrive on predictable and consistent routines. Inconsistent routines are especially difficult for children who experience separation anxiety. Individualized activities typically occur at the beginning of the day when children are most rested and alert. Timely arrival in the morning ensures your child can participate in these activities.

Staffing

Clayton Early Learning is committed to recruiting highly qualified staff who reflect the demographics of the children and families we serve. Ongoing training throughout the year supports all staff to link research with their knowledge of best practices 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 staff. All 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 upon hire.

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.

Daily Drop-off and Pick-up from School

Parking and Entry

Designated parking is available for caregivers in front of the Educare school to ensure safe loading and unloading of children. ***Please observe the laws regarding handicapped parking and do not park in handicap spots without having a legal need to do so.***

The school building is a secure facility, and entry requires use of a unique personal code on the keypad at the main door. Codes are issued to families at enrollment and may change from time to time. ***To maintain the security of the building, please do not give out your personal code or hold the door open for others.***

Visitors must ring the doorbell at the main door and sign in with the front desk. Visitors will be asked to provide their name, phone number, and purpose of their visit.

Morning Drop-off Procedures

1. Upon arrival each morning, sign your child into the classroom using the sign-in/sign-out sheet near the classroom door.
2. Check in with your child's teacher; communicate any questions or concerns you may have for the day.
3. For infants and toddlers, complete the Two-way Parent/Child Communication form.
4. Families receiving CCCAP tuition assistance will need to check-in at the ATS computer. ***Failure to check in and confirm your child's daily arrivals in the ATS system may result in additional fees or loss of CCCAP assistance.***

If you arrive in the morning with your child and their 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-in with the Managers of Education & Family Services or your Child Family Educator. Staff 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 the late arrival of a child (after 9:30 am), teachers will monitor how the child transitions into the classroom. If a child has difficulty transitioning into the classroom due to a late arrival, teachers will discuss adjustments to the child's routine with caregivers at pick-up

time. If late arrivals should become a pattern or are disruptive to the classroom, staff (including teachers, managers, and/or Director of Early Childhood) will meet with the family to brainstorm ideas and resolve the issue together.

Afternoon Pick-up Procedures

1. When picking up each afternoon, sign your child out of the classroom using the sign-in/sign-out sheet near the classroom door.
2. Check in with your child's teacher; collect any clothing or items belonging to your child.
3. Check your child's cubby for any communications from staff.
4. Families receiving CCCAP tuition assistance will need to check out at the ATS computer.
Failure to check out and confirm your child's daily pick-ups in the ATS system may result in additional fees or loss of CCCAP assistance.

Caregivers and guardians are responsible for promptly picking up their child at the end of their class at the agreed time. If the child is not picked up on time, the teacher or Child Family Educator will attempt to contact the caregivers.

If unable to contact caregivers, the teacher or Child Family Educator will call designated individuals on the Emergency Card. Children are released only to individuals eighteen years or older who have been authorized to pick up the child via the Emergency Card completed by caregivers and/or guardians at enrollment. Individuals listed will be required to show valid photo identification (I.D.) to classroom teachers when picking up the child. Families should inform staff when an authorized individual on the Emergency Card will pick up their child. Emergency Cards are periodically updated throughout the program year.

Any late child pick-ups will be addressed according to the following guidelines:

1. A late fee of \$1 per minute after the agreed upon pick-up time will be assessed.
2. If staff are unable to reach caregivers or Emergency Contacts thirty minutes after the agreed upon pick-up time or after program closure, staff have the discretion to call the Denver Department of Human Services if needed.
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.

Daily Classroom Routines

Each classroom's daily schedule is posted on the parent board inside the classroom.

Naptime and Safe Sleep Policy

Each classroom provides a quiet rest period or naptime for children during the day, along with a crib, mat, futon, or cot for each child to rest on. Teaching teams encourage resting using calming and quieting techniques (e.g., soft music, dimming lights, and back rubs) and many children will fall asleep during this time. A labeled favorite blanket or toy sent from home may help children older than one year old to rest and relax.

Classrooms with infants under one year of age follow [Safe Sleep](#) recommendations from the 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). All staff and volunteers working in classrooms receive annual training on Safe Sleep practices. All families with children under one year are given the full safe sleep policy and futon permission form to read and sign at enrollment. If you would like a copy, please speak with your Child Family Educator.

Diapering

All classroom staff are trained in proper diapering techniques posted at the changing areas in each classroom. Staff follow Universal Precautions guidelines to guard against disease by using disposable gloves, washing child and caregiver hands, and sanitizing the changing area before and after changing of each child. Diapers are provided for families receiving 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 or soiled, and show an interest in using the toilet, they 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 bodily functions and the toilet, they will gradually use the toilet on their own. If a child understands and is capable but is not willing, the child is not completely ready to learn how to use the toilet. Staff will work with the family to determine when the child is ready.

Outdoor Play

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

Clayton Early Learning follows 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 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. Staff 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. During sunny weather, sunscreen is applied to children whose caregivers have given permission to do so. Weather that poses a significant health risk includes a wind chill below -15°F (-26°C) or a heat index at or above 90°F (32°C), as identified by the National Weather Service (NWS). If outdoor play is not possible due to adverse weather or other conditions, children will engage in play in the Gross Motor Room.

Field Trips

Teaching staff periodically plan field trips for children aged three and older. Staff develop specific objectives for educationally relevant activities, which are reviewed and approved by Education Managers and/or the Director of Early Childhood. All field trips are planned and communicated to families in advance and will be posted on parent bulletin boards as well. Caregivers should always be notified when children leave the school for a field trip, and a sign should be posted on the door of the classroom indicating the classroom's whereabouts and estimated time of return.

We welcome your participation on field trips; however, please plan for your own transportation if there is insufficient room on the school bus. If a classroom does not have the necessary adult-child ratios (1 adult for every 4 children), the field trip will be cancelled.

[Food and Nutrition Policy](#)

Food service at Clayton Early Learning takes place 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 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 mealtimes because role modeling is essential to the development of their healthy eating habits and positive attitudes toward nutrition. Children should be offered all food and encouraged (in a friendly, non-directive manner) to take a serving and try the food. Children will never be forced to try food they do not want or to eat more food than they want. Cycle menus are designed to offer the children a variety of foods which consider USDA Food Regulations, special diet needs and 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.

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.

Dietary Restrictions or Preferences

If your child has food allergies 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 the instruction of the child's physician and upon the request of the parent.

Food from Home

Due to USDA food safety guidelines, food from home is not permitted to be brought, stored, or served in school at any time during licensed childcare hours or when children are present.

Clothing and Belongings from Home

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. School activities are sometimes messy, so bring a change of clothes for your child, including pants, shirts, socks, and underwear. Make sure all clothing is labeled with your child's name, including jackets and coats.

Since our classroom extends to the outdoors, please dress your child appropriately for the day's weather. Living in Colorado often brings different weather conditions in a single day. We recommend packing your child's backpack with extra clothes that will keep your child comfortable if the weather changes.

If families face difficulty providing an extra set of clothes, they can speak to their Child Family Educator for assistance.

Children's Belongings – Diaper Bags and Backpacks

Each classroom has individual cubbies where children store their personal belongings. All items brought to school should fit in their cubby, backpack, or diaper bag. 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. 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, as well as any labeled bottles of formula or breast milk, must be given to the teacher at morning drop-off.
- **For Toddlers (over 18 months)** - We suggest you bring at least two changes of clothing and 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 morning drop-off. If your child is toilet learning, please bring extra clothing in a plastic bag and label it with your child's name.
- **For Preschoolers (ages 3 to 5)** - We suggest you bring at least two changes of clothing and a blanket or comfort item. If your child is toilet learning, please bring extra clothing in a plastic bag labeled with your child's name.

Laundry Policy

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

[Health Guidelines](#)

All required health documentation must be on file and current for children to attend school (please see *Physical Health* in the **Wraparound Support Services** section of this handbook for more details).

Medication Administration

Current medication administration forms and medication must be onsite for your child to attend school. Clayton's health team works with families to develop a health care plan so that all staff can provide the best care for children.

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.

Prescription medications will be administered only by a staff person trained in medication administration by a Registered Nurse and will be recorded on an administration log. Caregivers must sign a medication administration form and provide written authorization from the physician, and the medication must be in its original container and given directly to a staff person designated to accept medication. All medication is stored out of reach of children in a locked container. If refrigeration is required, the medication will be stored in a locked container in the refrigerator.

Illness Policies

On the first day of a student's illness, caregivers should inform the teacher or Child Family Educator (CFE) of the student's illness and expected return date as soon as possible. If students are absent for multiple days, Clayton staff will continue to check in with caregivers daily to maintain awareness of the child's condition, provide referrals or support as needed, and ensure the child is well enough to return to school. In cases of more severe illness, documentation from a medical professional confirming treatment and recovery may be requested when the child returns to school. This policy helps us prevent the spread of illness and support family access to medical providers who can provide care for more severe illnesses.

If you are notified that your child is ill during the school day, you will need to plan to have your child picked up from 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.

Special Cases - Enrollment Requirements

- In cases with ***specific legal custodial arrangements*** (e.g., custody and restraining orders, court orders), Clayton *must* have legal documentation in your child's file stating custody guidelines. A parent or guardian can *verbally* authorize someone who is not a designated contact on Emergency Card only during emergencies.
- If caregivers are unable to meet the financial, work, or educational requirements of the school-based program option (including TANF and CCCAP eligibility), you will no longer qualify for wraparound services or extended day hours. The Child Family Educator will attempt to communicate with caregivers about why they no longer qualify for the school-based program option and provide information about other options available, along with qualification requirements for continuation in the program. The child may be transferred to available openings in other program options or be placed on a waitlist until an opening becomes available. If a child is placed on a wait list, eligibility for Early

Head Start or Head Start services may need to be redetermined.

- Parent fees assessed as part of CCCAP tuition assistance are decided by Denver Department of Human Services based on factors such as a family's household size and gross income. Parent fees are due to Clayton Early Learning by the 5th of each month; a payment is considered 'past due' if not received by the 5th. If you fail to submit redetermination packets on time or fail to sign your child in and out daily via ATS, you may lose CCCAP authorization. ***Caregivers are responsible for maintaining their authorization with CCCAP.*** If your authorization has expired, you will no longer qualify for wraparound services or extended day hours.