

# Ellis Family Manual

2024-2025



## A note from the CEO

Dear Families,

Welcome to Ellis! Since 1885, Ellis has proudly served families in the South End. In 2021 we were thrilled to open our third school in Jamaica Plain. Ellis is a wonderfully diverse school community where all children thrive, and we're delighted you're a part of it.

Our success is based on experience, professionalism, and warmly meeting the needs of our families while simultaneously responding to each child's individual needs. We respect every child and family, their culture and background, and each child's learning style. Through our celebration of individualism and diversity, we hope to enhance each child's feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy, which allow children to develop into active learners and problem-solvers.

We foster the growth of the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and creative development of each student. We teach using age-appropriate, evidence-based curricula through which our children learn, play, and experience joy. Our team is diverse, skilled, and highly trained to meet your family's needs. Our partnerships, particularly with the New England Conservatory, Neighborhood Villages, Boston Public Schools, Jumpstart, Raising a Reader, and others, further strengthen our ability to support Ellis children and families.

We have two, soon to be three, wonderful social workers on staff, in addition to a Family Navigator, to offer additional support to any family who needs it. I encourage you to learn more about our family support services and introduce yourselves to our talented team. They look forward to getting to know you and your wonderful children.

Thank you so much for selecting Ellis as your child's first school. We are honored to serve your families in this meaningful way and partner with you as your children develop during these critically important early childhood years.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chief Executive Officer ( and mom to daughters Austin, 8, and Charlie, 4 – both Ellis alums)

[LaurenCook@EllisEarlyLearning.org](mailto:LaurenCook@EllisEarlyLearning.org) | 617-377-4483

## **Non-Discrimination Disclosure**

Ellis was established in 1885 and has always maintained a policy of service to the disadvantaged. It hereby reaffirms its policy of service, delivery, and employment as one of non-discrimination. Access to employment and service delivery by all otherwise eligible persons regardless of race, creed, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, cultural heritage, political affiliation, age, physical or mental disability is and shall remain the policy and objective of the agency.

## A note from the Ellis Advancement Office

Dear Ellis Early Learning Families,

We are excited you are here, and we want to thank you for choosing Ellis as your child's first school.

There's a lot that makes us special, but Ellis Early Learning is proud to be a non-profit organization whose sole priority is to deliver outstanding early education in a loving and diverse environment, regardless of a child's background or means.

Committed to making excellent, equitable childcare as accessible as possible, we set tuition no higher than the cost of caring for each individual child. This is a crucial part of our mission, and it means we depend on philanthropic support to provide the high level of quality our children and families deserve. This year, our fundraising goal to fill our operating gap is \$1.6 million, and no gift is too small or too large to help us reach it.

Below are some ways parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors may support Ellis:

- Make a gift to Ellis by using the QR code, [online on our website](#), by check, or through a Donor Advised Fund
- Support *Celebrating Ellis and the Magic of Childhood*, our benefit celebration on November 7<sup>nd</sup>
- Follow us on social media (Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ellisearlylearning/> X: <https://x.com/EllisEarlyLearn> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EllisEarlyLearning> LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ellis-early-learning/>)
- Ask your employer if they have a Matching Gift program
- Introduce your friends or local businesses to Ellis. We'd love to welcome them for a visit to share our mission.
- Volunteer! Contact Gaia Roverato for more information ([groverato@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:groverato@ellisearlylearning.org)).
- Other ideas? Please contact Patti Keenan, Vice President for Advancement, Community and Equity at [pkeenan@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:pkeenan@ellisearlylearning.org) or 617-377-4473.

We welcome your participation in helping Ellis Early Learning to flourish this year, just as your children will in our care.

Best Wishes,



Patti Keenan  
Vice President of Advancement, Community, and Equity

Support Ellis Today



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## **Ellis Mission Statement**

*Ellis partners with families to provide high-quality early childhood education in a warm, nurturing environment. A recognized leader in our field, we support children across the socio-economic spectrum, treasure diversity in all forms, and celebrate the joy of childhood.*



# EEC & Ellis Contact Information



## The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)

Licensing Agency for Ellis Early Education Programs

Parents may contact EEC for information regarding Ellis's compliance history.

Ellis EEC Licensor: Patricia Weldon, (617) 979-8622

EEC Administrative Office:  
51 Sleeper Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02210  
(617) 988-6600

EEC Metro Boston Regional Office:  
1250 Hancock Street, Suite 120-S  
Quincy, MA 02169  
(617) 472-2881

## Ellis Contact Information

**Ellis Mailing Address:** 58 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116

**Early Education Center, 58 Berkeley Street, Boston** (617) 482-7341

**Early Education Center Fax No.** (617) 695-9309

**Ellis at 66 Berkeley Street** (617) 426-2900

**Ellis at 555 Amory Street, Jamaica Plain** (857) 719-0401

**Ellis Administrative Office** (617) 695-9307

**Ellis Administrative Office Fax No.** (617) 695-9309

**Lauren Cook, CEO & Overall Licensing Authority** (617) 695-9307  
[laurencook@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:laurencook@ellisearlylearning.org)

**Claire McNally, Vice President of Programs** (617) 482-7341  
[cmcnally@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:cmcnally@ellisearlylearning.org)

**Yaskara Cruz, Director of Jamaica Plain** (857) 719-0410  
[ycruz@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:ycruz@ellisearlylearning.org)

**Liz Brot, Lead Social Worker** (617) 695-9307  
[lbrot@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:lbrot@ellisearlylearning.org)

**Cherish Casey, Social Worker** (617) 426-2900  
[ccasey@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:ccasey@ellisearlylearning.org)

**Frances Velazquez** (617)-792-9293  
[fvelazquez@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:fvelazquez@ellisearlylearning.org)

**Daniel Lachar, VP of Accounting and Finance** (617) 695-9307  
[dlachar@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:dlachar@ellisearlylearning.org)

**Gladys Barboza, Billing** (617) 695-9307  
[gbarboza@ellisearlylearning.org](mailto:gbarboza@ellisearlylearning.org)

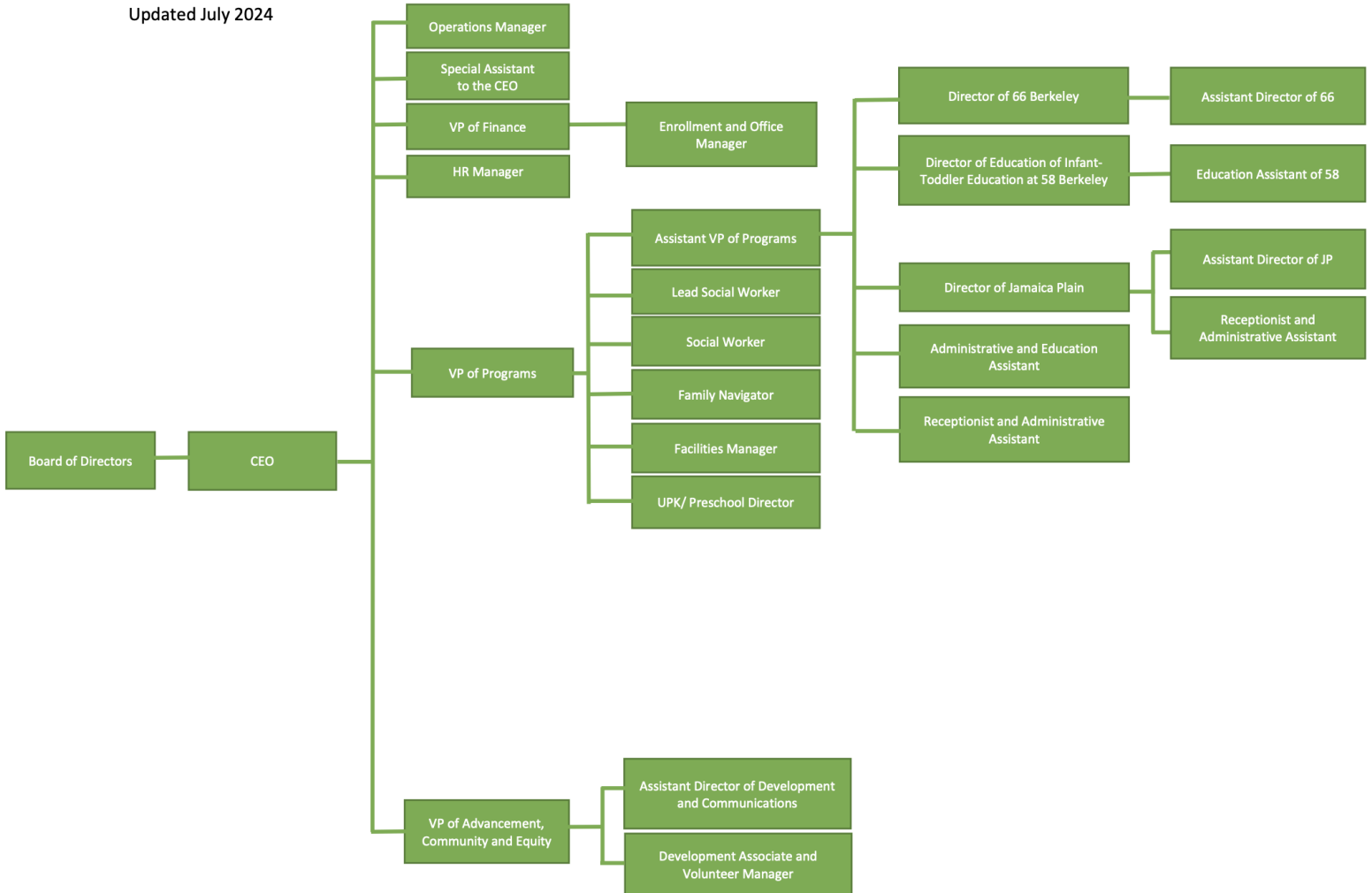


# Ellis Organizational Chart

## Updated July 2024



**Organizational Chart**  
Updated July 2024



# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

## Early Education & Care

The Early Education & Care program at Ellis consists of the Infant, Toddler and Preschool Program at 58 Berkeley Street and the Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Program at 66 Berkeley Street. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredits both locations. The Infant, Toddler, Preschool Program at 555 Amory Street is licensed and is in the self-study phase of NAEYC accreditation. The centers are typically open 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

Classrooms are grouped based on the age and development of the children. Each group includes a daily schedule reflective of the developmental needs and the interests of children. The structured yet flexible routine schedule including diapering, eating, dressing, activities, and resting are handled in a relaxed, reassuring, and individualized manner. Nutritious meals including breakfast, lunch, and snack, are provided for children one year old and up. The curriculum is designed to foster the growth of the "whole child" (i.e. the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and creative development of each child). Ongoing assessments track development to help ensure children are progressing and prepared for future learning. The programs draw upon the richness of the multi-cultural diversity of children and families.

Ellis programs provide a safe and nurturing environment designed to meet the needs of each individual child according to his/her/their developmental needs. The set up allows children to learn through the process of play while encouraging strong relationships with caregivers and other children.

### INFANT AND TODDLER PROGRAM

The Infant and Toddler program located at 58 Berkeley Street provides quality care for 57 children ages 1 month to 33 months old.

### **Preschool**

#### UPK PROGRAM

UPK (K1 and K0) program located at 58 Berkeley Street serves 60 preschool children ages 3 to 5 years old. Ellis is proud to partner with Boston Public Schools to provide two community-based K1 classrooms and one K0 classroom, known as UPK. The program utilizes evidence-based curricula, and research-based assessment tools, and employs experienced teachers with college degrees who receive ongoing coaching.

### 66 BERKELEY EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Infant, Toddler, Preschool program located at 66 Berkeley Street provides quality care for 68 children ages 1 month to 33 months old.

### 555 AMORY STREET EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Infant, Toddler, Preschool/ UPK program in Jamaica Plain provides quality care for 58 children ages 1 month to 5 years old.

## PROGRAM SERVICES

The Ellis team is trained to provide and implement positive behavior strategies that support social-emotional growth and peer relationship building. Staff have an understanding of age-appropriate expectations and will remove materials or modify the classroom environment to prevent triggers of challenging behaviors. A predictable daily schedule is provided in all classrooms so children know what to expect. Routines such as diapering, eating, dressing, and resting are handled in a relaxed, reassuring, and individualized manner based on developmental needs.

Before working alone with children, new teaching staff are given an initial orientation that introduces them to fundamental aspects of program operation, including Ellis's philosophy, values, goals, expectations for ethical conduct, health and safety procedures, classroom management techniques, routines of the program, curriculum, child assessments, enrollment forms and information about the individual needs of the students they will be caring for, child abuse and neglect reporting procedures, program policies and procedures, licensing regulations, NAEYC Early Childhood Program standards, and any other relevant regulatory requirements. Follow-up training throughout the year expands on the initial orientation.

### Early Screening

All new children participate in a developmental and social-emotional screening to identify any immediate needs. Based on the result a referral plan process may be followed to determine next steps.

### Social Worker and Family Services

Ellis Early Learning has two full-time Social Workers and a Family Navigator on staff to provide ongoing supportive services to children, families and the Ellis team. Resource and referral information, as well as individual and/or family sessions, are available. The Social Worker will provide Parenting Skills/Training Workshops, in conjunction with the Vice President of Programs and other community providers, September through May. The Social Worker will also be available to meet individually with families by appointment. The Ellis Family Navigator works closely with the Ellis Social Worker to provide additional support to families, specifically to ensure our families have access to the resources they need.



### Referral Services

When an area of concern is identified in the child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and/or medical development, the Ellis staff will observe, assess and record concerning behaviors and will report to the Vice President of Programs and Social Worker. This information will in turn be shared with the child's parent or guardian and a service plan will be developed. Initial steps may include a joint meeting with the parent or guardian and the appropriate Ellis staff, an investigation of possible resources (both BPS and community), information about CORE evaluations, vision/hearing screening, etc. A list of community resources is available to all Ellis parents and guardians. Ellis may also refer to experts in assessing the child's needs and in developing support strategies.



The staff at Ellis will work together with parents to identify and find appropriate services for their child. If parents do not follow through with referrals, we reserve the right to terminate services. Unfortunately, Ellis is not equipped to meet the special needs of some children and may not be the appropriate placement for all children. If Ellis is unable to provide an appropriate environment for the child, we will make referrals to other resources.

## Referral Plan

- If staff is concerned about a child's behavior or needs, the staff person will bring this concern to the Vice President of Programs.
- The Vice President of Programs and staff person will plan an observation or series of observations for the child. The child's behavior will be documented (with respect to the concern or issue) using daily log sheets. The Social Worker will work one-on-one with children in need of extra support. All documentation will be maintained in the child's file.
- Once the observation and documentation are complete, a meeting will be scheduled with the parent.
- The meeting with the parent will:
  - Identify the concern(s) or issue(s)
  - Share written observations
  - Develop a service plan, including parental referrals
  - Provide the parent with a written list of community resources
  - Inform parents of services to which they are entitled, including EI, and CORE evaluation screening
- The Social Worker will follow up with:
  - Helping the parent implement the service plan
  - Documenting the meeting with the parent, including recommendations made by the Ellis staff, and the outcome of the meeting. All documentation will go into the child's file
  - No referrals will be made without written consent of the parent
  - If a referral is unsuccessful – i.e. the child is not receiving the services, either an alternate referral will be made or the child's needs will be reviewed on a monthly basis to determine the need for re-referral

## Early Intervention at Ellis

Ellis is proud to partner with [Thom Child and Family Services](#) to provide optional evaluations for Early Intervention services for any family at Ellis with a child under the age of 3 years old. The term Early Intervention, or "EI", refers to services and supports available to babies and young children who would benefit from additional help reaching their milestones. Based on eligibility, services may include speech therapy, physical therapy, and other types of services based on the needs of the child and family.

Evaluations and subsequent services (if the child is eligible and the family elects to participate) can take place on site at Ellis or at home. Families play an important role in the Early Intervention process. Families work in partnership with early educators and Early Intervention Clinicians in order to ensure children receive the support they need.

Ellis has seen the benefits for children who participate in EI for decades, and according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), **"EI can have a significant impact on a child's ability to learn new skills and overcome challenges and can increase success in school and life."**

**Early Intervention is free for eligible families;** insurance or the Department of Public Health covers the related expenses. Please indicate in your intake packet if you would like your child to be evaluated. If so, Thom will contact you directly to arrange an evaluation date and time that works well for you and your child. Learn more about Thom Child & Family Services at [www.thomchild.org](http://www.thomchild.org)

## Referral Resources

### The Boston Public Schools (BPS)

BPS offer educational support services to all children over three years of age that live in Boston. The Evaluation Team Leader (ETL) at your child's school is the person to contact. Call the school for the name, phone #, and days the ETL is available.

(617) 635-9050

[www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org)

### South End Community Health Center

Medical, dental, WIC & family support services, visual & hearing services, behavioral health.

400 Shawmut Avenue, Boston, MA

(617) 425-2000

[www.sehc.org](http://www.sehc.org)

### Boston Medical Center Pediatrics

700 Albany Street, Boston, MA

(617) 266-0709

[www.bmc.org/pediatrics-primary-care](http://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-primary-care)

### Boston Children's Hospital

(617) 355-6000

Dental services: (617) 355-6571

[www.childrenshospital.org](http://www.childrenshospital.org)

### Home for Little Wanderers

780 American Legion Highway, Roslindale, MA

(617) 463-8500

[www.thehome.org](http://www.thehome.org)

### Thom Boston Metro Early Intervention

555 Armory Street, Jamaica Plain, MA

(617) 383-6522

[www.thomchild.org/boston-metro.htm](http://www.thomchild.org/boston-metro.htm)

### Big Brothers Big Sisters of Massachusetts Bay

75 Federal Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

Boston, MA 02110

617-542-9090

[www.bbbsmb.org](http://www.bbbsmb.org)

### ABCD

Central Office

178 Tremont Street, Boston, MA

(617) 348-6000 TTY: (617) 423-9215

[www.bostonabcd.org](http://www.bostonabcd.org)

### Children's Services of Roxbury

520 Dudley Street

Roxbury, MA 02119

617-445-6655

[www.csrox.org](http://www.csrox.org)

## Translation Services

Ellis makes every effort to provide translation services when needed for families whose first language is not English. Many Ellis employees are multilingual and can be called upon to assist in communication. Ellis will also use all available resources to assist families who need translation services outside of our immediate availability.



## PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Ellis takes its responsibility to provide a safe and secure facility seriously and takes all necessary precautions to manage building access at all times.

All parents/providers will be notified at least 7 days in advance, in writing, prior to the implementation of any policy/procedure change.

### Building Security and Access

**SOUTH END:** All parents and visitors are required to ring the Ellis doorbell for entry to the building. Doors are monitored by surveillance and opened by staff only.

Each Ellis floor is accessible by keypad entry. Codes are changed bi-annually for safety. Ellis parents and caregivers are provided the codes, which are not to be shared broadly. Children are not permitted to know the entry codes.

**JAMAICA PLAIN:** Accessible to families with registered key fobs. Each family will receive a unique key fob to gain access to the building, which will be activated and deactivated dependent on their enrollment.

### Attendance

Regular attendance is important to a child's adjustment to Ellis. Please bring your child daily.

### Arrival

Ellis Infant, Toddler, and Preschool classrooms are typically open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM (please verify these hours with the Ellis team). **Arrival time is between 8:00 and 9:30 AM.** If you plan to arrive after 9:15 AM, please feed your child breakfast at home. Please plan your arrival with enough time to say a warm goodbye to your little one, and to connect with the teaching staff. **Please note, toys from home are not permitted in Ellis classrooms to avoid conflicts between friends.** If your child insists on traveling to Ellis with a toy or something else from home, please take it with you when you depart.

**Children may not be dropped off outside or in the lobby. Parents are to accompany their child into their classroom and let the teacher know of the child's arrival.** Parents are also responsible for washing the child's hands upon arrival to the classroom, removing the child's outerwear as well as putting away any belongings. Please use this time to let the teacher know any relevant information about your child (e.g. medication, eating or sleeping irregularities, etc.). **Children cannot be dropped off at the playground or field trip location. If arriving once the classroom has left the classroom, the parent must wait with the child(ren) until the classroom returns.**

### Departure from Ellis

**Children are to be picked up no later than 5:30PM** (please verify the closing hours with the team). If there is an emergency situation, the parent/guardian is to notify Ellis as soon as possible.

Ellis requests families plan to arrive at Ellis by 5:25pm to ensure time to connect with the teaching staff and collect your child's belongings with enough time to exit the building by 5:30pm.

If you intend to pick up your child earlier than usual, please notify Ellis in advance in order for the staff to arrange for your child to be ready. For example, if you want to pick up your child at 1:00 PM, then s/he/they should not start naptime.

If someone different is to pick up your child, please call and notify Ellis. This person must be authorized by you and will be asked for identification.

### **Late Pick-Up Policy**

**Ellis programs typically close at 5:30 PM.** Children remaining past closing time require staff to work beyond their usual hours; therefore, a late fee will be assessed. Please refer to your fee agreement for cost details, and please note that your late fee will be applied to your next Ellis bill. If a child is not picked up and there is no contact made with the parent or emergency contact list, the director on duty will call the child-at-risk hotline to have the child picked up.

### **Release of Children to Adults other than the Parent/Caregiver**

Ellis will not permit children to be released into the care of anyone other than the child's custodial parents/caregivers. If you wish to have your child picked by someone else (e.g. relative, babysitter, friend, nanny), Ellis must have written permission on file, or you must call Ellis personally if the arrangement is last minute. Your identity will be verified if such a call is placed, and the identification of the person picking up your child will be checked upon arrival. Please inform those involved that ID is required and will be checked.

### **After-Hours Student Childcare Policy**

Throughout the years Ellis has worked hard to develop the role of its teachers as one of trusted and respected educators. We recognize the importance of maintaining professional boundaries and avoiding potential conflicts of interest and/or liability issues while prioritizing the safety and well-being of both our teachers and students. We have developed this policy to provide clear guidelines and boundaries for Ellis teachers regarding their providing childcare services for students outside of Ellis hours.

**To protect and maintain those professional distinctions described above, effective July 1, 2023, Ellis will no longer allow its teachers to begin providing childcare services separate and apart from their educational role with Ellis.** Families should refrain from requesting personal or private childcare arrangements, including babysitting, childcare, or overnight stays.

### **WELCOME TIME (Drop-Off) and REUNION TIME (Pick-up)**

**10 Minute Parking for Drop-off 8am-10am & 10 Minute Parking for Pickup 4-5:30pm**

### **NO IDLING**

**SOUTH END:** The red meters in front of 58 and 66 Berkeley Street are designated for parent drop-off and pickup within the designated times listed. **Families are not permitted to double-park.** Ellis is not responsible for parking tickets, and families must dispute tickets independently with the City of Boston. **Please DO NOT block the driveway adjacent to the 58 Berkeley red meters.**



**JAMAICA PLAIN:** Families are only permitted to park in spots designated with signs for Ellis Early Learning. Please wait for a spot to open up before parking, as the building may tow cars parked in other spots. We have received complaints from other tenants in the building about Ellis families parking in their spots, so please be mindful of this. Also, please follow the

directional arrows of the parking lot at all times.

### **Pick-Up Safety Policy**

If a staff person has a reasonable concern that a parent/guardian is unable to safely transport a child/children home, the child/children will not be released to the parent/guardian. Reasonable concerns include but are not limited to, evidence that the parent/guardian may be impaired and possibly under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

In the event a child/children is not released to a parent/guardian because of safety concerns, the following steps will be taken in this order:

- If possible, another parent/guardian will be called to come pick up the child/children.
- The emergency contact person will be called to pick up the child/children.
- If no one can be reached to come pick up the child/children, then the police will be called to safely transport the child/children home;
- Ellis will document the incident and follow up on it.

### **Classroom Departure**

Check your child's cubby/caregiver mailbox at the end of the day to see his/her projects and to clear it for the next day. In addition, check to make sure your child has at least one complete change of clothes (where applicable).

For an Infant or Toddler, please have two complete changes of clothes for your child. At the end of each day you are responsible for packing your child's belongings (e.g. medications, bottle, food, etc.), checking their mailbox/cubby, and dressing your child in his/her outerwear.

### **Absence**

If your child will be absent due to illness, vacation, or any other reason, please notify Ellis as soon as possible, preferably that day, and before 9:30 AM. Excessive absences may result in termination.

### **Snow Day Policy**



Ellis does not automatically follow BPS with regard to snow-related closures. Ellis may be open during snow days, provided our teachers can reach the centers safely. If the Governor declares a **'state of emergency'** all Ellis programs will be closed. Late openings or early closures due to extreme weather are possible. If you have any questions regarding a closing, check our website or call the front desk. If weather conditions become hazardous during the day, parents/guardians may be called to pick up their child/children early.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event that weather conditions become hazardous during the day, the parent/guardian will be called to arrange transportation for their child/children. Program closing due to weather will be announced via ProCare, on the phone greeting of your child's program site, the Ellis website at [www.ellisearlylearning.org](http://www.ellisearlylearning.org), and Ellis's social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram). Please ensure Ellis has an up-to-date email address to receive email updates on closures as well.





## Vacation and Holiday Schedule

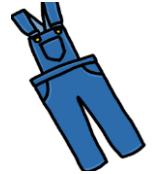


Parents and guardians will be given a list of annual closures upon registration and annually. The schedule is available on the Ellis website [www.ellisearlylearning.org](http://www.ellisearlylearning.org) in the “For Families” section. These days may change depending on the Department of Early Education and Care. Parents/guardians will be given ample notice of any program closing. Please be advised we do close early prior to specific holidays and for teacher appreciation. Early closures are also noted on the annual closure list.

## Clothing



Dress your child in sturdy, washable clothes that can take wear and tear, messy projects, and occasional spills. Classrooms will go outside almost every day, even in cold weather, so all children should be dressed as warmly as possible with coats, boots, snow pants or snowsuits, hats, and mittens/gloves when it is cold outside. All clothing, shoes, and boots



should be clearly marked with the child's name. Ellis is not responsible for clothing that is not labeled.

## Meals

Ellis is happy to provide meals for children ages one year old and up, Ellis provides breakfast, lunch, and a snack. Ellis meets all the federal requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which contributes to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children and adults in the United States. Menus are posted in the program and on Ellis's website. Please do not send candy, sweets, donuts, fast food, etc. into Ellis with your child. You must report in writing any food allergies/restrictions for your child. Infant parents must complete a menu for their child.



Please note, **Ellis cannot refrigerate or heat food from home.** Food must be accompanied by an ice pack in a small lunch box or in an insulated thermos if to be served warm.

## Infant Feeding and Bottles

**PLEASE LABEL ALL BOTTLES AND TOPS, INCLUDING SIPPY CUPS.** This is an EEC requirement to help ensure the safety of your children.

Parents must supply all meals for children under a year old. Infants and toddlers trying out new foods must first try it at home in case of allergies. Please do not bring in new foods for your child to try at Ellis.

Breast milk bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name and date expressed. Because breast milk bottles are refrigerated, they will be warmed to room temperature prior to serving.

Formula bottles should be delivered to Ellis unmixed. Bottles should come filled with water from home and the formula powder separate. Teachers will prepare the bottles on site. Please note, Ellis does not heat baby bottles.

## Diapering and Toilet Teaching at Ellis

Ellis is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families, and employees. Ellis will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the risk of communicable diseases. Diapering and toileting time are approached as an opportunity for meaningful interactions rather than a task to hurry through, and teaching children important lessons: that bodily functions are a normal, healthy part of everyday life. Each child's diaper is changed on a regular basis throughout the day and when wet or soiled; Educators keep at least one hand on the child at all times when the child is being changed on an elevated surface and all supplies are within reach. Parents/Guardians are responsible for maintaining adequate supplies of diapers, when relevant, as well as any ointments/creams (must be labeled for each child). At least one change of clothes must be available for each child. Teachers wash their hands to ensure the health and safety of everyone. Soiled clothes are placed in a sealed plastic bag with the child's name and must be taken home on the same day.

**Toilet Teaching at Ellis:** Children learn toileting in accordance with the requests of the parents PLUS the interest and developmental abilities of the child. Between 2 and 3 years of age, children typically become physically, cognitively, and emotionally ready to begin using the toilet. Ellis staff, along with the child's family, follow the child's lead, are supportive, work together, and avoid power struggles, so that collectively we can make mastering the skill of using the toilet a pleasant learning experience. Ultimately, this approach will allow the child to also develop the self-confidence that comes with gaining self-control.

**Disposable Diapers:** Soiled disposable diapers are placed in a closed container that is lined with a leak-proof disposable lining. Soiled diapers are removed from the program daily, or more frequently as necessary.

**Cloth Diapers:** Soiled non-disposable diapers are placed in a sealed plastic container provided by the parent labeled with the child's name and returned to the child's parent/guardian at the end of the day, per EEC regulations.

## Communication

Communication between Ellis and caregivers is essential, and we often communicate via ProCare, email, or via forms or notices in the classroom. Please check your child's cubby or "parent pouches" daily. We also post reminders on designated areas of the buildings and/or classrooms to remind parents of different events. Please call the front desk to be connected to your child's classroom for updates; we encourage you to call during naptime to avoid program disruptions.



Bulletin boards and Family Information boards are located in common areas. Check them regularly for general information about community resources, workshops, and children's events in the area. Please also check your email for Ellis Weekly Updates and the monthly newsletters, and make sure you have the classroom email address.

Infant parents should use ProCare to document relevant information for their teacher (e.g. when infant woke for the day, last ate, and last had a diaper change). Infant parents must also complete a menu for their child. For infants and toddlers, a completed daily report is provided to the parent at the end of each day via ProCare. If you would like additional information about your child's day, please feel free to send messages to your child's teacher via ProCare, but note teachers will be focused on the classroom, and will reply when they have time.

# HEALTH POLICIES

## Emergency Procedures

Prevention of medical emergencies begins with the knowledge of underlying medical issues. It is essential, therefore, that the entire Ellis intake packet is completed thoroughly and transparently, and that emergency contact information is updated whenever necessary. It is also important to note that Ellis should always have the most current working phone number for the parent/caregiver of each child on file. Thus, if your telephone number should change during your child's time at Ellis, please notify Ellis immediately.

In case of emergency, all efforts will be made to contact the parent/guardian. If we cannot contact the parent/guardian, we will contact the person(s) named on the Emergency Consent Form. Your signature gives permission for your child to be treated if you or the other person(s) cannot be reached or if it is necessary for your child to be given immediate medical care before you arrive. Please be sure to notify all people named as emergency contacts and make sure they are aware of their responsibility. **These emergency names MUST be current and up to date.** We need all parents/guardians to complete new emergency consent forms each year. All medical forms also need to be updated once per year.



Your physician on a yearly basis must complete the Massachusetts School Health Record.

- A Family History form must also be completed and both must be on file at the Center. Ellis has a consulting health professional on staff.
  - Infant/Toddler Health Records are completed on a periodic basis. Please talk with the Vice President of Programs for specifics.
  - Toddler and Preschool health records are required annually, and Infants are required every 3 months.

We have no separate facility for the long-term care of a sick child; therefore, we ask that you be especially aware of approaching illness. It is not in the best interest of the child, other children, and the staff for a sick child to remain at Ellis. However, we do recognize it is difficult for parents/guardians to miss work. For this reason, it is important that parents set up alternative care arrangements for days when their child cannot attend Ellis due to illness. In the event of illness, we will ask you to take your child home if we feel that he/she needs to see a doctor, is contagious, or requires prolonged individual staff attention which interferes with the safety of the remaining children. In some instances, a doctor's note may be required before the child returns to school.

In the interest of your child's health and the health of the other children and staff members, please keep your child at home under any of the following conditions:

- **FEVER:** A child will be sent home if s/he has a fever of 100 or higher along with symptoms of illness. **The child must be fever-free without medication for 24 hours before returning to Ellis.** At this point, the child's activity level and appetite should be back to normal.
- **DIARRHEA:** A child who has diarrhea will be sent home. The child may return to Ellis 24 hours after stool has returned to normal. If your child has an allergy or condition which regularly causes diarrhea, please alert the Director and staff of this during orientation and provide program with documentation from their pediatrician.
- **VOMITING:** A child who is vomiting will be sent home and should remain at home for at least 24 hours after vomiting has stopped. Stomach viruses are highly contagious and will spread through Ellis very rapidly.

- If a child starts an antibiotic or any other medication, they must be on it for 24 hours before returning to school to ensure the absence of reaction and contagion.
- Children must be able to keep up with the demands of a typical school day to be well enough to attend.
- Children must stay home on the day of medical procedures, including receiving ear tubes, having a tooth pulled, or receiving stitches.

### **Communicable Diseases**

If a child has or has been exposed to a communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox, measles, impetigo, or any other contagious illness) the parent or guardian is requested to inform the Vice President of Programs immediately in order to notify other parents to be on alert for any symptoms. We must have a written statement from the child's doctor saying the child may safely return to Ellis.

If your child has a contagious infection that requires antibiotics, he/she may return to Ellis only when the temperature is normal and antibiotics have been administered for 24 hours. If a child's immunization is not up to date or is exempt from immunizations due to religious or philosophical beliefs, that child may be excluded from the program during an outbreak.

### **Dispensation of Medication**



Any medication to be administered while at Ellis must have first been administered at least once at home by the parent/guardian. This procedure is required for the safety of the child in the event there are any side effects to the new medication.

If your child is prescribed medication (e.g. an antibiotic), the child must be on it for 24 hours prior to returning to Ellis.

Prescription and non-prescription medications can be administered by Ellis staff provided the required procedure is followed:

- An Authorization for Medication Form must be completed by the parent/guardian/Doctor specifying child's name, dosage, and times to be given.
- A separate form is needed for each individual medication.
- Authorization forms are good for the term the medication is needed or for ongoing medications, one year from the time it is signed.
- Prescription medication must be in the original container with prescription adhered specifying child's name, dosage and instructions, physician's name and expiration date of medication.
- Any medications without clear instructions on the container must be administered in accordance with a written physician's order.
- Non-Prescription medication will be administered with a physician's note and parental consent. These medications must be in their original packaging.
- Medication must be given directly to the Vice President of Programs.

**Please do not place any medication in backpacks with children's belongings as these are easily accessible by other children.**

For chronic conditions (such as asthma):

- A Chronic Health Condition form must be completed with information specific to the child by the child's Doctor.
- Any medication will be administered in the same fashion as all other prescriptions as

directed.

If your child has a medical condition which requires medication while at Ellis the medication must be available at the program at all times. If we do not have the proper medication and instructions for administration your child will not be able to stay in the program as we cannot care for your child properly.

Communication between parents and staff is very important, especially in the case of chronic conditions where medication may be on an as-needed basis. If your child receives medication prior to coming to childcare, please let the staff know so that they may administer any further medication properly according to hourly requirements. A child's Chronic Health Form must be updated yearly and as needed if there is any change in medication, frequency of administering or there are specific changes related to the condition.

Topical medications:

- Such as diaper rash cream, Aquaphor, or antibacterial ointments must be in their original packaging.
- These may be administered with parental consent and staff will inform parents that it was applied during that day.
- Oragel or teething medications cannot be administered without a note from the physician.

Any medication that requires injection will not be administered aside from an Epi-Pen for severe allergic reactions.

**If a physician has ordered a special medical management procedure for your child, an adult trained in the procedure must be on site whenever your child is present.**

Ellis staff will maintain a written record of the administration of any medication, prescription, and non-prescription, for each child which includes the time, date, and method of administration, dosage, the name of the staff member administering, and the name of the child. The record will be a part of the child's file.

Unless otherwise specified in a child's individual health record, all medication will be stored out of reach of the children and under the proper conditions for sanitization, preservation, security, and safety during the time in care and also during the time when children are using transportation.

All medications that require refrigeration will be stored in the kitchen refrigerators, in a specified, labeled container.

All unused, discontinued, or expired medication will be returned to the parent for disposal.

### **Compliance with Allergy-free Areas**

A significant portion of staff and children's time is spent in the classroom. As a result, Ellis has established the following guidelines to minimize the presence of dust mites and other allergens in the classrooms:

All sheets and blankets are to be washed weekly (or when soiled) in hot water at home. Linens should be taken home each Friday and returned on Monday. An extra set should be left in your child's cubby in case of accidents. In addition:

- Carpets are professionally cleaned monthly, and as often as needed.
- The Ellis Facilities Manager will maintain the heating/air conditioning system by changing the filters regularly.

For the safety of our children and staff with severe food allergies, all Ellis buildings are peanut and tree nut (including coconut) free. This includes the use of nut-based milks (nut free milk alternatives include oat, rice, and soy). Thus, we ask that families who bring in alternative milks to Ellis select an allergy-friendly (non-nut) milk, exclusively.

Because nut allergies can be life-threatening to some, even with minimal surface-level exposure, we request that families be mindful of their breakfast choices at home and either omit nuts or wash hands thoroughly before coming to Ellis. We appreciate your understanding and care for the most vulnerable in our community.

### **Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS) Policy**

All infants 12 months and under are placed on their backs for sleeping. No other sleep positioners are allowed unless a signed letter from the child's health care professional is provided. Ellis provides a safe sleep environment including an individual crib; firm, properly fitted mattresses with clean coverings (parents must supply clean fitted sheets); and slats on crib are no more than 2-3/8 inches apart. Classroom lights are kept on at all times and staff remain in the room at all times while infants are sleeping. The cribs used in the infant classrooms meet the U16 CFR 1220 standards. All Infant Program staff have taken SUIDS training, as outlined by the EEC Infant Sleep Safe Policy. No blankets or toys are allowed in the crib for children under a year old. Sheet size is the pack-and-play/mini crib sized sheet, not the standard crib sheet. If an infant arrives to the program asleep or falls asleep in equipment not specifically designated for infant sleep, the infant is removed and placed in his/her crib.

### **Lead Paint Poisoning**

Lead paint poisoning is often an undetectable disease that develops very slowly. Although most environments are free of lead paint, children remain susceptible because of their constant handling and mouthing of objects. EEC also requires a lead test as part of child's routine care while attending child care and are required starting at 9-12 months and then annually through age 5.

### **Emergency Contingency Plan**

In the event of fire, natural disaster, loss of water, heat, or power, the children in each program will be transported to a safe location, kept safe and warm and parents/guardians will be notified of the site change. Parents will have the option of picking up their child at that time or at the regular program closing time. Site-specific evacuation plans are posted at each exit at all program sites and regular evacuation drills are held in all programs.



INFANT, TODDLER, PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS at 66 BERKELEY: In the event of fire, natural disaster, loss of water, heat, or power the children at the Infant/Toddler/Preschool Program, located at 66 Berkeley Street, will be transported to Ellis at 58 Berkeley Street and parents/guardians will be notified of the site change. Specific exit instructions with building floorplan are labeled in each classroom.

INFANT, TODDLER, UPK PROGRAMS at 58 BERKELEY: In the event of fire, natural disaster, loss of water, heat, or power the children at 58 Berkeley Street, will be transported to Ellis 66 Berkeley Street and parents/guardians will be notified of the site change. Specific exit instructions with building floorplan are labeled in each classroom.

INFANT, TODDLER, PRESCHOOL PROGRAM at 555 Amory, JP: In the event of fire, natural disaster, loss of water, heat, or power the children at 555 Amory Street, will be transported to English High School and parents/guardians will be notified of the site change. Specific exit instructions with building floorplan are labeled in each classroom.

When relocating in the event of fire, natural disaster, loss of water, heat, or power the designated program staff will take with them an attendance list, medical consent forms, medication first aid kit, and emergency contact information. Attendance will be taken before relocation and retaken after relocation.

## ABUSE & NEGLECT

### Abuse & Neglect Policy

All staff must immediately report to the Vice President of Programs and/or Social Worker any concerns or information regarding possible child abuse or neglect. Included in this is physical injury, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, etc. Any incidents leading to a suspicion of abuse or neglect are to be documented in writing.

After gathering information and assessing the situation, the Social Worker and the Vice President of Programs will decide if there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has suffered abuse or neglect. In the event there is reasonable cause, the Social Worker or the Vice President of Programs will then file an oral report with the appropriate area office of the Department of Children and Families and the licensing agency, the Department of Early Education & Care. A written report, called a 51A, will follow within 48 hours.

The Social Worker will attempt to notify the family of a **51A filing** depending on the severity and time of the filing. The Social Worker will also assist the family as needed during the DCF assessment process and help in finding resources and referrals to appropriate services. Ellis has a consulting health professional on call for any emergency medical situations that may occur during school hours.

If a staff member is suspected of allegedly abusive or neglectful behavior, s/he will not work directly with children until DCF and EEC have conducted and completed their investigation(s). The employee will be assigned to the administrative office or placed on administrative leave. Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a child enrolled at the Agency is suffering physical or emotional injury as a result of neglect or abuse (including sexual abuse) must immediately notify the staff Social Worker or the employee's immediate supervisor, or the CEO. The obligation to report extends to all instances of child abuse or neglect whether occurring on or off the Agency's premises.

All employees must cooperate fully with any investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect.

## POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

### Behavior Management

The Ellis team uses the following procedures for positive behavior management:

- Determine reasonable expectations regarding child's behavior that is appropriate to their understanding
- Demonstrate these expectations to the child in a clear, consistent, and concrete manner
- Provide a great deal of positive feedback and encouragement
- Be a positive role model for children
- Anticipate problems and try to prevent them by distracting or redirecting the child, giving gentle reminders, using humor, changing group composition, etc.
- If the negative behavior persists, point out the natural and/or logical consequences in a calm, non-threatening manner
- Consequences should occur as soon as possible after the negative behavior in order to be

of learning value to the child

- Only when absolutely necessary, the child may be asked to briefly leave the area, activity, etc. to re-regulate
- Children may not be subjected to neglect, physical punishment, spanking, verbal abuse, ridicule, humiliation, force-feeding, denial of food, rest or bathroom facilities
- Punishment for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet, or related to eating or not eating food is not permitted. Forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet is not permitted. (*Department of Early Education & Care Regulations*)

If a child is emotionally upset and his/her behavior presents possible harm to self, other children or staff and requires one-to-one supervision for any length of time, the parent, guardian, or designated emergency contact person will be called to take him/her home.

A parent conference would then be scheduled to discuss possible referral services. All meetings with the parent/guardian will be documented and kept in the child's file. Referral services will assist in determining appropriate resources and/or setting for the child. If a child is terminated, 2 weeks' notice will be given in order to prepare the child and his/her family.

Children respond well to structure with clear limit-setting. The developmental level of the group, the individual needs of the children, safety issues, etc. all must be considered in setting limits. Rigid and unnecessary rules often result in behavior and discipline problems. If necessary, a teacher may put consequences on a child's actions. The consequences should be seen as a logical outcome. While we don't expect this to occur, parents may be asked to pay partial or full reimbursement in the event that a child's behavior causes damage to Ellis property.

### **Suspension Policy**

Ellis does not suspend children. If a child is having a difficult time, the Vice President of Programs and/or Social Workers will meet with the parent/guardian to discuss the situation and work through it. If needed, and if the parent/guardian agrees, the child will have a day off from the program.

Days off are only warranted when a child is behaving in ways that create a safety risk for that child and/or his or her classmates or team members. During that time, we may:

- Meet with the parent/guardian to develop a safety and intervention plan so that the child may be able to remain in childcare.
- Give the parent/guardian an opportunity to seek help for the child.

### **Termination Policy**

Ellis believes that continuity of care is most often in the best interest of the child. Therefore, we try to prevent termination as much as possible. However, if we need to terminate a child, you will be notified in writing of the reason and be given two weeks' notice so you can prepare your child for the transition. Please note, that parent/caregiver behavior and communication style can be a contributing factor in cases of termination.

Children may be terminated for the following reasons:

- Persistent negative or disruptive behavior that creates a safety risk for the child, other children, or staff
- Your child is absent on a continued basis\*
- Your child is late for drop-off or pick-up on a continual basis
- **Payment for childcare services is delinquent by three weeks** (Note: In an attempt to prevent termination for nonpayment, Ellis will work with the parent/guardian to negotiate a payment plan with our Finance and Enrollment Assistant)



- **Parent/Guardian has not provided the paperwork required by EEC in a timely manner (within 14 days of Ellis's request** (Note: Ellis will make reasonable attempts to contact the parent/guardian if paperwork has not been received within the required timeframe)
- Parent/Guardian commits an act of violence against an employee, child, family of a child, vendor, or visitor to Ellis, including but not limited to any of the following acts: verbal abuse, physical attack, intimidation, threats, or property damage, as determined in Ellis' sole discretion.
- Parent/guardian refusal to cooperate with Ellis when recommendations are made in the best interest of the child.

\*Recurrent failure of a parent/caregiver to notify Ellis of a child's absence may be grounds for termination of a childcare subsidy or may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

## Probation Policy

Each child that enrolls in our Program begins in a 30-day introductory period. If, at the end of 30 days, Ellis believes our environment is not suitable for a child, we will confer with the parent or guardian and refer the child to a more appropriate program.

## ENROLLMENT

### Enrollment & Transition Plan for Early Education Programs

Prior to enrollment, all families are encouraged to visit Ellis and participate in a transition process. During the intake process, families share essential information regarding the child's developmental history, goals, needs, and interests. Families are also encouraged to share information about any support services their child may be receiving, including Early Intervention, speech support, occupational therapy (OT), ABA, or behavioral/mental health services. Teachers and families engage in two-way communication during arrival and pick-up times. Ellis's open-door policy allows families to visit at any time. The assessment process keeps parents involved. All new children are screened within 45 days of enrollment to detect any immediate needs. Screenings are also administered as children age up from toddlers to preschool and upon aging out of Ellis.



For infants, the daily schedule is flexible, responsive, and supportive to personal needs, especially around special needs, transitions, needs to rest, or be active. For toddlers-preschoolers, the structured yet flexible daily schedule includes transition methods used throughout the day to help children move from one area of the room to another smoothly. As children age up to the next classroom, a transition process is required to introduce the child to his/her new phase of learning. Developmental information and new goals are provided for the new teacher by the parent and previous teachers. To help families with their transitions to kindergarten and other programs or schools, general information on enrollment procedures and program options are provided.

### Tuition Payment Policy

Tuition fees are calculated on Ellis fee agreement forms. Prior to registration, parents must sign fee agreement forms and be aware of all current tuition amounts to be paid. **At the time of registration, 2 weeks tuition will be required. Prior to that, a deposit may be required to secure your spot.**

- Tuition Rates: **Infant, Toddler, Preschool, and UPK rates** are posted on the Ellis website

(<https://www.ellisearlylearning.org/our-rates>). Private rates are updated annually.

- Tuition fees are based on five-day per week enrollment of your child, including all holidays, vacation, and sick days.
- **Tuition fees are to be paid two weeks in advance of services rendered.** Payments may be paid weekly or monthly. The payment schedule must be adhered to on a regular basis.
- For the most accurate tuition due monthly, please multiply the daily fee times the number of school days per month. The monthly fee will vary depending on the number of days in a particular month. For example:
  - June = 21 days x daily fee = monthly fee \$
  - October = 23 days x daily fee = monthly fee \$
- All questions regarding weekly billing statements should be directed to the finance department at 617-695-9307.

All families must stay current with tuition payments. Each family must pay two weeks of tuition charges before their child begins to attend. One week is considered a deposit and the other week is payment for the first week of attendance. Tuition charges may be paid weekly or monthly. No cash is accepted for tuition payments.

Our preferred method of payment is by scheduled credit card or direct debit through ProCare. Any payment that is declined by the credit card or debit card issuer will result in the family's account to be billed a \$10 processing charge.

Ellis does not permit on-sight direct payment transactions. If it is not possible to establish payment via scheduled credit card or direct debit through ProCare, payment may be made by check or money order and mailed to Ellis at 58 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116.

All payments must be received in advance of the attendance period, that is on or before the first day of the week/month the payment applies. Consistent with EEC requirements, Ellis will not permit accounts to get behind in payments. Per EEC policy, any family account that is three weeks behind will necessitate termination of attendance until the account is brought current.

Ellis's Finance and Enrollment Associate must be notified of any late payment of tuition fees so a payment schedule can be arranged. Failure to arrange for payment of late fees will result in the termination of services. To reiterate, per EEC policy, families will be terminated when they have payments 3 weeks in arrears.

Tuition fees must be maintained during absences due to sickness or vacation. All absences must be explained. There are no additional fees for field trips or program materials.

### **Terminating Child Care Service**

When voluntarily terminating childcare at Ellis, one month's notice prior to your child's last day is required. If one month's notice is not provided, you will be charged for the entire final month of care, regardless of end date. Failure to pay any outstanding balance will result in the account being forwarded to a collection agency that, in return, reports to a national and local credit bureau.

Due to our lengthy waitlist of families in need of care, an unexplained absence of three or more days will result in reassessment and possible termination of childcare services.

# CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT

## Caregiver Participation

Parents and caregivers are critical stakeholders in helping their children gain the most they can from our programs. We encourage parents to participate at Ellis since this is an excellent way to become familiar with the program and the staff. Participation will provide your child with a sense of continuity between home and school, which will in turn facilitate his/her/their adjustment to the program. Parents have opportunities to provide input that will help with the development of the program policies throughout the year using suggestion boxes, meetings, and annual evaluations of the overall quality of the program.



## Caregiver Visits

Typically, parents and caregivers are welcome to spend time in the classroom, visit for lunch or share any talents or interests you have with the children. We ask that visits be arranged in advance whenever possible so the team can prepare the class and your child for the visit. Unannounced visits to the classroom are also permitted whenever your child is present.

## Caregiver Contacts

Each family will have their child's primary teacher as their contact, as well as their supervisor. In addition, the Vice President of Programs or Social Worker will also be available as needed. This is to facilitate communication between parents/guardians and staff. Parents are notified seven days in advance in writing of any changes implemented into the program, including changes in staffing, policies, new pets, menus, and other issues that may arise.

## Caregiver-Teacher Conferences

All Educators are trained to conduct children's assessments. Infant and Toddler conferences are typically held every three months until the child is 15 months old and every six months for a toddler. In addition to the conference, a daily report is posted in ProCare.



A minimum of two conferences with parents and staff is required per year for Preschool and UPK. The first conference is scheduled within the first four weeks of your child's enrollment at Ellis and the remaining two conferences may be scheduled throughout the year. A conference may be requested at any time by a parent/guardian or teacher who has concerns about a child. Conferences are a time for sharing information about a child's growth, interests, and special needs. A progress report is completed which gives us a complete understanding of each child's needs. This report is shared with the parent/guardians at the meeting and cannot be released without written permission from the parent or guardian. Conferences are the ideal opportunities for families and educators to share and set goals for the children.

When needed, conferences with families that speak a language other than English will have an interpreter and necessary materials are translated.

## Caregiver-Staff Cooperation

For Ellis to run smoothly, it is important that communication be clear and consistent. Parents/guardians and teachers need to cooperate with each other in order to provide what is best for your child. For this reason, **we expect parents/caregivers to:**

- Raise concerns and/or questions in a professional manner with the Teacher, Director, or

Social Worker (raised voices or shouting is not permitted)

- Meet with staff without children present (raising a concern in a classroom is not permitted)
- Respect staff and work with them
- Provide constructive feedback and follow through on all incidents
- Provide positive feedback as well as express concerns
- Maintain a level of professionalism and respect in dealing with the Ellis team, other children or parents\*

**\*Parents/caregivers who are unable to maintain an adequate level of professionalism and respect when communicating personally at or immediately outside Ellis, or with an Ellis team member by phone or in writing, risk the possibility of childcare termination.**

### **Parent/Caregiver and Visitor Code of Conduct**

In order to maintain an orderly, respectful and secure educational environment for the students and staff of Ellis Early Learning, it is essential that all parents and visitors to our school be aware of their responsibilities and adhere to the expected code of conduct set forth below.

#### **Respect**

All members of Ellis Early Learning, including, but not limited to employees, volunteers, students, and families are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

#### **Safety and Conduct on School Property**

Ellis Early Learning is a place of work and learning. The school is responsible for ensuring a safe environment. As such, certain limits must be set for parents/caregivers, and other persons who visit our schools and classrooms. All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. The following rules apply to visitors to the school:

- Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school will be considered a visitor.
- Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the director or his/her designee. Unauthorized persons may be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.

All visitors are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct outlined below for the safety of our students and employees.

#### **Prohibited Conduct on School Property**

*No person shall:*

- Act in a disorderly or disrespectful way to Ellis students and/or employees through speech and/or actions.
- Intentionally injure any other person or threaten to do so.
- Intentionally damage or destroy school property or the property of a teacher, administrator or other school employee or any other person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson.
- Disrupt the orderly conduct of classrooms, school programs, or other school activities.
- Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in the building after it is normally closed.
- Obstruct the free movement of any person in any place to which this code applies

- Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages, controlled substances or be under the influence of either on school property or at a school function.
- Please do not bring vaping devices, cigarettes, or lighters into school buildings, and please avoid marijuana use immediately prior to drop off and pick up to ensure Ellis remains a safe and substance-free environment.
  - **Please be mindful** that secondhand smoking (non-smoking person inhaling the smoke) and thirdhand smoke (odor of smoke on the smoker's clothes/body, car, home being inhaled by others) impacts everyone's respiratory system, especially those with chronic illnesses such as eczema, asthma and allergies. Exposure to second and thirdhand smoke can cause flare-ups, allergy triggers and/or asthma attacks and can affect children of all ages, staff and other families, whether it is cigarette or marijuana smoke.
- If a person is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, the school reserves the right to call local law enforcement or DCF prior to releasing a student to that person's care.
- Possess or use weapons in or on school property or at school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers.
- Loiter on or about school functions
- Gamble on school property or at school functions.
- Refuse to comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school officials performing their duties
- Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance or board policy while on school property or while at a school function.

### ***Persons in violation of the Code of Conduct***

The authorization of a visitor, to remain on school grounds or at any school function shall be withdrawn and they shall immediately be directed to leave the premises if they are in violation of this code of conduct. If they refuse to leave, an administrator of the school will call the local law enforcement agency to remove them from school grounds for the safety of students and all other persons. Depending on the nature of the conflict, the school may pursue a no trespass order against persons in violation of this policy. **Parents/caregivers who are unable to maintain an adequate level of professionalism and respect when communicating personally at or immediately outside Ellis, or with an Ellis team member by phone or in writing, risk the possibility of childcare termination.**

### **Problem-Solving**

In the event of parental concern regarding a particular team member, it is strongly encouraged that the parent/guardian speaks directly to the staff member to resolve the issue. In the event that the parent/guardian feels uncomfortable, or the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved; the parent/guardian should meet with the Vice President of Programs. If this situation is still not resolved to the satisfaction of parent/guardian, a meeting should be set up with the Chief Executive Officer. The parent/guardian also has the legal right to contact the licensing authority, the Department of Early Education & Care, if the situation is not resolved to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.

If a parent/guardian threatens or harms another parent/guardian, child, teacher, or employee of Ellis, the person making the threat will be immediately escorted from the premises. Return to the program will be prohibited, length of prohibition to be determined by Ellis management. During

this period, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make alternate arrangements for their child's' drop-off and pick-up needs. Ellis may continue to provide childcare services, if, however, the person/child threatened continues to feel unsafe, Ellis reserves the right to terminate childcare services immediately.

## PARENT/CAREGIVER RIGHTS

### Parent/Caregiver Notifications

If there is a change in policy and/or procedure in any program, parents will be given written notification seven days prior to implementing the change. The policy and/or procedure change will also be submitted to EEC for their files.

### Confidentiality

Each child has a file that contains all the required forms, any written communications from the parent/guardian, and input from the staff of the child's program. The child's file and records are available to Ellis administrative staff and the Vice President of Programs. A written authorization is needed before any information is released to any outside agency. Parents or guardians may request access to their child's folder at any time.

Staff may discuss your child with other Ellis staff only in those areas that relate directly to the services the staff person is providing for your child.

### Children's Records

Parents have the right to add information and relevant materials. Parents may request that information be deleted or amended. Conferences regarding concerns and/or objections will be scheduled upon request. One week after the conference Ellis must change the record according to parent's request or give parent a written decision as to why not.



Records are available to parents upon written request. Please submit the aforementioned request in a timely manner.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Gift Giving/Teacher Appreciation

You'll soon discover how terrific Ellis teachers are, and you may find yourself wanting to recognize them personally for their efforts and commitment to your children.

**If you would like to give gifts (cash, gift cards, something specific), we recommend doing so prior to winter break and/or when your child transitions to their next classroom.**

**Teacher Appreciation Week** is celebrated each year in May, and families contribute to creating a special week for our teachers. The Teacher Appreciation Week Planning Committee will reach out to all families with opportunities to help. **This is a collective effort in support of all teachers and personal gifts are not recommended at this time (personal thank you notes, however, are encouraged.)**

## Photographs



Outside agencies or individuals will only be permitted to photograph children with parental photo consent. Ellis staff reserves the right to take photographs of the children for educational and/or curriculum purposes without specific consent. It is very helpful to Ellis when families provide consent for photos, so we can best illustrate the important work happening within our centers.

## Special Needs

Parents/guardians should notify the Vice President of Programs in writing, in advance of enrollment, of any special needs or any physical, emotional, or other conditions which will in any way affect the full participation of their child in the program.

**If your child has an IEP, 504 plan, or Family support plan, we ask you to provide a copy so we can best support your child.**

## Research

Written consent will be obtained from the parent/guardian to allow children to participate in a research project. The person conducting the research will send a written summary of the project or experiment home with a consent form. The parent/guardian will read the letter and return the consent form. Only the children who have written permission will participate in the study.

## Safety in the Workplace

Ellis is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all employees and families. To that end, it is the policy of Ellis that violence in any form is unacceptable. Any form of violence or threats of violence by an employee against another employee, student, vendor, or visitor to the Agency, including but not limited to physical attack, intimidation, threats, or property damage, will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal as unacceptable personal conduct. Any form of violence by a parent/guardian against another parent/guardian, Ellis employee, student, vendor, or visitor to the Agency, including but not limited to physical attack, intimidation, threats, or property damage, will be cause for disciplinary action.

## Custodial Orders

Copies of any custodial orders and/or restraining orders must be kept on file and up to date so that Ellis can honor them.

## Head Lice (Pediculosis)

Head Lice is somewhat common in preschool classrooms. Head lice poses no real health risk to the population and is viewed as no more than a nuisance by health care professionals. However, since the condition can be transmitted to others, proper and successful treatment is essential. Our goal is to educate the students and parents on proper identification and elimination of head lice and nits as quickly as possible to minimize interruption of classroom time.

Any student found to have evidence of head lice infestation is to be excluded from the Program until proper treatment for lice has been completed and the child is nit free.

## PROCEDURE:

- Any student suspected of having head lice should see the Vice President of Programs or designee.
- If the student has evidence of head lice the following steps will be taken:
  - Siblings will be called for a head check
  - Parents/guardians will be contacted to take child/children home for treatment
  - Information on chemical and non-chemical treatment options will be given to the parent/guardian
- Notice will be sent out to the affected classroom(s) as soon as possible. Classroom checks are not done for individual cases. As a guideline, 3 active cases in a classroom within a week may be cause for a classroom screening.
- Re-entry to school will be allowed once student is inspected by a designated staff member.
- Parents must tell staff which treatment option was chosen (chemical or non-chemical).
- If the student has not used a chemical treatment, all lice and eggs (nits) must be removed before reentry into the classroom

## **Emergency Contingency Planning – Prevention of Lost Child Policy**

Ellis works to prevent losing children by adhering to the following procedures:

- Always counting the number of children in each group both before leaving Ellis, when arriving at the destination, when leaving the destination and when the children return to Ellis. And then counting again.
- Always having an accurate attendance record on hand.
- Always checking the environment for potential “hiding” spots for either children or unknown strangers.
- Always speaking with children before taking them from the center about safety rules.
- Always having emergency information on our attendance clipboards.
- Always closely supervising the children.

However, in the very unlikely event that a child does go missing while in our care, the following procedures will be followed:

- One adult staff will remain with the group of children while the lead teacher checks the environment for the missing child.
- If that teacher is not successful, she will then call Ellis and give details. Ellis staff will call the local police and will advise them of the location of the children and the area where the missing child was last seen.
- The second adult will remain with the group engaging them in activities to keep them calm and occupied.
- Ellis will notify the parents and advise them of the progress.
- Ellis staff will go to the area where the children are located to meet with the police/family and help in locating the child.
- Staff will return to Ellis with the group of children.
- Situations will be escalated to local authorities if warranted.

## **Emergency Transportation**

In case of emergency or injury, Ellis will immediately contact the parent/guardian regarding emergency along with the information on where the child is being transported to (e.g. Boston Medical Center). The director or a staff person will make every effort to accompany the child until the parent/guardian arrives. If off-site, the Vice President of Programs will meet the child at hospital.





## **In Closing**

We realize we just shared a considerable amount of information with you! Please feel free to ask the Ellis team at any point for reminders on certain policies, should you need them. This Family Manual complies with EEC requirements.

**We so look forward to serving your family this year!  
As always, thank you for choosing Ellis.**

