

Ellis Family Handbook

2025-2026



A note from the CEO

Dear Families,

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

Our strength lies in our experience, professionalism, and in our warm, responsive approach to meeting the needs of every child and family. We honor each child's individuality—their background, culture, and learning style—and celebrate the diversity that enriches our classrooms. We believe when children feel seen, valued, and supported, they grow into confident learners and compassionate problem-solvers.

We foster the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and creative development of every child, using age-appropriate, evidence-based curricula that center joy and exploration. Our diverse, highly trained team is here to support your family every step of the way. We're also proud to partner with organizations like the New England Conservatory, Neighborhood Villages, Boston Public Schools, and Raising a Reader to enrich our programs.

Ellis also offers robust family support services, including three wonderful social workers and a Family Navigator. I encourage you to connect with them and explore the many ways they can support you and your child throughout the year.

Thank you for choosing Ellis as your child's first school. We are honored to partner with you during these critically important early years.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Cook". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

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

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.

Table of Contents

<i>Ellis Mission and Vision Statement.....</i>	<i>1</i>	Diapering and Toilet Teaching at Ellis	13
<i>EEC & Ellis Contact Information.....</i>	<i>2</i>	Communication	13
<i>Ellis Organizational Chart</i>	<i>3</i>	HEALTH POLICIES	14
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	4	Emergency Procedures	14
Early Education & Care.....	4	Communicable Diseases	15
Infant and Toddler Program .Error! Bookmark not defined.		Dispensation of Medication	16
Preschool	Error! Bookmark not defined.	Compliance with Allergy-free Areas	18
PROGRAM SERVICES.....	5	Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS) Policy	18
Early Screening	5	Lead Paint Poisoning.....	18
Social Worker and Family Services	5	Emergency Contingency Plan	18
Referral Services.....	6	ABUSE & NEGLECT	19
Referral Plan.....	6	Abuse & Neglect Policy	19
Early Intervention at Ellis	6	POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT	20
Referral Resources.....	7	Behavior Management	20
Translation Services	8	Suspension Policy	20
PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES.....	8	Termination Policy.....	21
Building Security and Access	8	Probation Policy	21
Attendance	8	ENROLLMENT	21
Arrival	8	Enrollment & Transition Plan for Early Education Programs.....	21
Departure from Ellis.....	9	Tuition Payment Policy ..Error! Bookmark not defined.	
Late Pick-Up Policy	9	Terminating Child Care Service.....Error! Bookmark not defined.	
Pick-Up Safety Policy	10	CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT	23
Absence	10	Caregiver Participation	23
Snow Day Policy	11	Caregiver Visits.....	23
Inclement Weather Policy.....	11	Caregiver Contacts.....	23
Vacation and Holiday Schedule	11	Caregiver-Teacher Conferences.....	23
Clothing.....	11	Caregiver-Staff Cooperation.....	24
Meals	11	Caregiver/Caregiver and Visitor Code of	

Conduct.....	24
Problem Solving.....	24
CAREGIVER/CAREGIVER RIGHTS.....	26
Caregiver/Caregiver Notifications	26
Confidentiality.....	26
Children’s Records	26
MISCELLANEOUS	27
Gift Giving/Teacher Appreciation	27
Photographs.....	27

Special Needs	27
Research	27
Safety in the Workplace.....	27
Custodial Orders.....	28
Head Lice (Pediculosis).....	16
Emergency Contingency Planning – Prevention of Lost Child Policy	28
Emergency Transportation.....	28

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.

Ellis Vision

Every child thrives and every educator flourishes in an inclusive and equitable learning environment.



EEC & Ellis Contact Information

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)

Licensing Agency for Ellis Early Education Programs

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

Ellis EEC Licensur: Deadra Lopes

EEC Administrative Office:

50 Milk St 14th floor

Boston, MA 02109

(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

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cmcnally@ellisearlylearning.org

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ccasey@ellisearlylearning.org

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fvelazquez@ellisearlylearning.org

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dlachar@ellisearlylearning.org

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billing@ellisearlylearning.org

Ellis Organizational Chart



Organizational Chart
Updated July 2025



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Early Education & Care

The Early Education & Care program at Ellis includes our Infant, Toddler, and Preschool classrooms across three locations: 58 Berkeley Street, 66 Berkeley Street, and 555 Amory Street. All three centers are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and are typically open Monday through Friday, from 7:45 AM to 5:45 PM.

Classrooms are grouped by age and developmental stage, with daily schedules designed to reflect the developmental needs and interests of the children. Each classroom follows a structured yet flexible routine that includes diapering, meals, dressing, activities, and rest—all approached in a relaxed, reassuring, and individualized way. Nutritious meals—breakfast, lunch, and snack—are provided for children one year and older.

Our curriculum is designed to support the growth of the whole child—physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and creatively. Ongoing developmental assessments help ensure children are progressing and well-prepared for future learning. The program also embraces the rich cultural diversity of our children and families.

Ellis provides a safe, nurturing environment tailored to each child's developmental needs. Classrooms are set up to promote learning through play and to foster strong, trusting relationships between children and caregivers.

BOSTON PRE-K PROGRAM

In partnership with Boston Public Schools, Ellis proudly provides four Boston Pre-K classrooms. The program utilizes evidence-based curricula, research-based assessment tools, and is led by experienced, college-educated teachers who receive ongoing coaching.

The Boston Pre-K (K1 and K0) program at 58 Berkeley Street serves 60 preschool children ages 3 to 5. Additionally, Ellis-JP at 555 Amory Street offers one K0 classroom, serving 20 three-year-old children.

66 BERKELEY EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Infant, Toddler, Preschool program located at 66 Berkeley Street provides quality care for 69 children ages 1 month to 33 months old.

555 AMORY STREET EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Infant, Toddler, Preschool/ Boston Pre-K program in Jamaica Plain provides quality care for 59 children ages 1 month to 5 years old.

Classroom Communication Expectations by Age Group

At Ellis, we use ProCare to keep families informed and connected throughout the day. Each classroom is equipped with a tablet to document and share updates. ProCare offers families a meaningful window into their child's day—but our priority will always be the children themselves, not the perfect photo.

Teachers are encouraged to use ProCare thoughtfully and sparingly, ensuring that their attention remains centered on caring for and engaging with the children. Below is an overview of what families can expect in terms of communication, based on age group:

Infant Classrooms:

- Real-time updates on diapering, eating, and napping

- One photo per day

Toddler Classrooms:

- Real-time updates on diapering, eating, and napping
- A few photos per week

Preschool Classrooms (Breakers and Red Sox):

- Updates on diapering (when applicable)
- Napping information
- A couple of photos per week

Boston Pre-K Classrooms (Maple, Celtics, Patriots, Bruins):

- Updates on diapering (when applicable)
- Napping information
- A couple of photos per week

Note: Preschool and Boston Pre-K classrooms are vibrant, busy environments with more students and a broader curriculum. As a result, ProCare updates may be less frequent than in infant and toddler classrooms—this is both typical and developmentally appropriate.

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.

Family Support Team

Ellis Early Learning has three full-time Social Workers and a Family Navigator 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 Family Support Team may provide Caregiving Skills/Training Workshops, in conjunction with the Vice President of Programs and other community providers, from September through May. The social workers will also be available to meet individually with families by appointment. The Ellis Family Navigator works closely with our social workers to provide additional support to families, specifically to ensure our families have access to the resources they need.



Referral Services

When there is a concern about a child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, or medical development, the Ellis team will thoughtfully observe, assess, and document any patterns of behavior. These observations will be shared with the Vice President of Programs and the Family Support Team. We will then meet with the child's caregiver or guardian to discuss our observations and collaborate on a supportive plan. This may include a joint meeting with relevant Ellis staff, exploring available resources (such as BPS and community programs), and providing information about CORE evaluations, vision and hearing screenings, and more. A list of community resources is available to all Ellis families, and referrals to outside specialists may be made as needed to better understand and support the child's needs.



We are committed to working in partnership with families to identify and connect children with appropriate services. In some cases, if referrals are not followed through, or if a child's needs exceed the level of support Ellis is able to provide, we may need to recommend a transition to a setting better suited to meet those needs. In such cases, our team will support the family in identifying alternative resources and next steps.

Referral Plan

- If there is a concern about a child's behavior or needs, the Vice President of Programs will be informed.
- The Vice President of Programs and others 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 caregiver/caregiver.
- The meeting with the caregiver/caregiver will:
 - Identify the concern(s) or issue(s)
 - Share written observations
 - Develop a service plan, including caregiver referrals
 - Provide the caregiver with a written list of community resources
 - Inform caregivers of services to which they are entitled, including EI, and CORE evaluation screening
- The Social Worker will follow up with:
 - Helping the caregiver implement the service plan
 - Documenting the meeting with the caregiver, 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 the written consent of the caregiver
 - 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 monthly 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 in reaching their milestones. Based on eligibility, services may include speech therapy, physical therapy, and other types of care tailored to the

child's and family's specific needs.

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 essential role in the Early Intervention process. Families work in partnership with early educators and early intervention clinicians to ensure that 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

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

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

Boston Medical Center Pediatrics

700 Albany Street, Boston, MA
(617) 266-0709
www.bmc.org/pediatrics-primary-care

Boston Children’s Hospital

(617) 355-6000
Dental services: (617) 355-6571
www.childrenshospital.org

Home for Little Wanderers

780 American Legion Highway, Roslindale, MA
(617) 463-8500
www.thehome.org

Thom Boston Metro Early Intervention

555 Armory Street, Jamaica Plain, MA
(617) 383-6522
www.thomchild.org/boston-metro.htm

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Massachusetts Bay

75 Federal Street, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02110
617-542-9090
www.bbbsmb.org

ABCD

Central Office
178 Tremont Street, Boston, MA
(617) 348-6000 TTY: (617) 423-9215
www.bostonabcd.org

Children’s Services of Roxbury

520 Dudley Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
617-445-6655
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 caregivers/providers will be notified at least 14 days in advance, in writing, prior to the implementation of any policy/procedure change.

Building Security and Access

SOUTH END: All caregivers 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 caregivers 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 7:45 AM to 5:45. **Arrival time is between 7:45 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. Caregivers are to accompany their child into their classroom and let the teacher know of the child's arrival. Caregivers 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 caregiver must wait with the child(ren) until the classroom returns.**

Departure from Ellis

Children are to be picked up no later than 5:45PM (please verify the closing hours with the team). If there is an emergency situation, the caregiver/guardian is to notify Ellis as soon as possible.

Ellis requests families plan to arrive at Ellis by 5:35pm to ensure time to connect with the teaching staff and collect your child's belongings with enough time to exit the building by 5:45pm.

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. Please do not share the South End door codes or your JP fob with people who do not regularly pick up.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Ellis programs typically close at 5:45 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 caregiver 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 Caregiver/Caregiver

Ellis will not permit children to be released into the care of anyone other than the child's custodial caregivers/caregivers. If you wish to have your child picked up 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 7:45am-10am & 10 Minute Parking for Pickup 4-5:45pm

NO IDLING AND NO ILLEGAL PARKING

SOUTH END: The red meters in front of 58 and 66 Berkeley Street are designated for caregiver 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 become available before parking, as the building may tow cars parked in unauthorized areas. 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 caregiver/guardian is unable to safely transport a child/children home, the child/children will not be released to the caregiver/guardian. Reasonable concerns include but are not limited to, evidence that the caregiver/guardian may be impaired and possibly under the influence of alcohol, or drugs.

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

- If possible, another caregiver/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

Please 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. Additionally, please ensure your child has at least one complete change of seasonally appropriate clothes (where applicable). Infants and toddlers need two complete changes of clothes.

At the end of each day, you are responsible for packing your child's belongings (e.g. medications, bottles, 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, caregivers/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 caregiver/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, and Ellis's social media accounts (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



Caregivers 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 in the **"For Families" section**. These days may change depending on the Department of Early Education and Care. Caregivers/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 proudly participates in the **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**, a federal initiative under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The primary goal of CACFP is to ensure that children in care receive nutritious meals and snacks, and that child care providers are trained in nutrition. Through this program, both children and educators learn about food and healthy eating habits.



By participating in CACFP, Ellis ensures that your child:

- Receives well-balanced, nutritious meals and snacks
- Is served meals that meet USDA standards for young children
- Learns about food and healthy eating to support lifelong wellness

What Families Should Know:

- Ellis will ask you to complete certain forms required by CACFP, including optional income eligibility forms. These forms are confidential. All children are eligible for CACFP regardless of family income, as long as the necessary forms are signed.
- Special meal arrangements can be made for children with documented dietary restrictions or special nutritional needs.
- You may be contacted periodically to share feedback about the types and quality of meals your child receives in care—this helps us monitor and improve the program.
- Ellis menus and snacks are planned according to CACFP guidelines and are posted regularly on the Ellis website.

Through the CACFP, Ellis receives reimbursement for meals and snacks that meet the program's nutritional standards. Ellis may be reimbursed for up to two meals and one snack—or two snacks and one meal—per child each day. Families are **not** charged a separate fee for meals and snacks served and claimed through CACFP at Ellis-affiliated family child care homes.

At Ellis, we believe that developing healthy habits early—including nutritious eating—helps give children a strong foundation for lifelong health and well-being. Thank you for partnering with us in this important work.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained [online](#), from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

For further legal information about the CACFP, as well as information about your Civil Rights and how to file a Civil Rights complaint, please consult the information at this link: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/civilrights/>

Addition Reminders:

- Please do not send candy, sweets, donuts, fast food, etc. into Ellis with your child.
- Please report in writing any food allergies/restrictions for your child.
- Infant caregivers must complete a menu for their child.

- **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.

Caregivers 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. Caregivers/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 caregivers 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 caregiver labeled with the child's name and returned to the child's caregiver/guardian at the end of the day to be cleaned and sanitized, 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 "caregiver pouches" daily. We also post reminders on designated areas of the buildings and/or classrooms to remind caregivers 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 caregivers 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 caregivers must also complete a menu for their child. For infants and toddlers, a completed daily report is provided to the caregiver 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

Immunization Policy

At Ellis, the health and safety of all children, families, and team is our highest priority. Due to a significant increase in measles cases and the serious risks this poses—particularly to infants and individuals with compromised immune systems—all children enrolled in our programs must be up to date on all required immunizations, including the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Ellis does **not** accept religious exemptions for immunizations. If there is a documented medical reason a child cannot receive one or more vaccinations, families must provide a written letter from a licensed physician explaining the medical exemption. This documentation will be reviewed by Ellis administration prior to the child's attendance in our programs.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and healthy environment for everyone in our community.

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 caregiver/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 caregiver/guardian. If we cannot contact the caregiver/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 caregivers/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 caregivers/guardians to miss work. For this reason, it is essential that caregivers 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. If you are to be called to pick up your child due to illness, please plan to do so within an hour of the call. 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. Please note, if the temperature is taken at Ellis under the arm, one degree is added to the reading, per recommendation.
- **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, COVID, impetigo, or any other contagious illness) the caregiver or guardian is requested to

inform the Vice President of Programs immediately in order to notify other caregivers 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.

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

Head Lice are somewhat common in preschool classrooms. Head lice pose no real health risk to the population and are viewed as no more than a nuisance by healthcare professionals. However, since the condition can be transmitted to others, proper and successful treatment is essential. Our goal is to educate students and caregivers on the proper identification and elimination of head lice and nits as quickly as possible to minimize interruptions to 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
 - Caregivers/guardians will be contacted to take child/children home for treatment
 - Information on chemical and non-chemical treatment options will be given to the caregiver/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.
- Caregivers 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

Dispensation of Medication



Any medication to be administered while at Ellis must have first been administered at least once at home by the caregiver/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 caregiver/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 caregiveral 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):

- An Individual Health Care Plan (from the doctor or the EEC 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 that 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 caregivers 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 caregiveral consent and staff will inform caregivers 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 caregiver 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 positions are permitted 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 (Ellis will supply clean fitted sheets for infants); and slats on crib are no more than 2-3/8 inches apart. Classroom lights are always kept on, 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. 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 caregivers/guardians will be notified of the site change. Caregivers 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 caregivers/guardians will be notified of the site change. Specific exit instructions with building floorplan are labeled in each classroom.

INFANT, TODDLER, BOSTON PRE-K 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 caregivers/guardians will be notified of the site change. Specific exit instructions with building floorplan are labeled in each classroom.

INFANT, TODDLER, BOSTON PRE-KPROGRAM 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 caregivers/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 caregiver, guardian, or designated emergency contact person will be called to take him/her home.

A caregiver conference would then be scheduled to discuss possible referral services. All meetings with the caregiver/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, caregivers 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 caregiver/guardian to discuss the situation and work through it. If needed, and if the caregiver/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 caregiver/guardian to develop a safety and intervention plan so that the child may be able to remain in childcare.

- Give the caregiver/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 caregiver/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 caregiver/guardian to negotiate a payment plan with our Finance and Enrollment Assistant)
- **Caregiver/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 caregiver/guardian if paperwork has not been received within the required timeframe)
- Caregiver/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.
- Caregiver/guardian refusal to cooperate with Ellis when recommendations are made in the best interest of the child.

*Recurrent failure of a caregiver/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 who 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 caregiver 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 caregivers 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 caregiver 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, Billing & Payment Policies

Fee agreement & deposit

- **Fee agreement:** Families review and sign the Ellis fee agreement at the time of enrollment. The agreement will outline your tuition amounts.
- **Deposit:** A deposit equal to **two weeks of tuition** is due at enrollment to secure your spot. It will be refunded when your family leaves Ellis in good standing.

Tuition rates

- Current Infant, Toddler, Preschool, and Boston Pre-K tuition rates are posted on the Ellis website (www.ellisearlylearning.org/our-rates). The tuition rates are updated annually.
- Tuition is calculated for full-time, five-day-per-week enrollment, and is payable even on holidays, vacations, and any days your child is absent (e.g., illness or personal leave).
- There are no additional charges for program materials or field trips.

Payment schedule & invoicing

- **Weekly schedule (default):**
 - Invoices are sent the week before care is provided.
 - Payment is due in advance **no later than Monday of that service week.**
- **Monthly schedule (optional):**
 - Families may request monthly billing.
 - For the monthly schedule, payment is due on or before the first day of the month.
 - Monthly tuition is calculated as your daily rate (weekly tuition divided by 5) times the number of weekdays in that month.

Payment method

- Our preferred payment method is **scheduled bank transfer through our billing software.**
- If it is not possible to establish payment via bank transfer through our billing software, then payment may be made by check or money order mailed to Ellis Early Learning, 58 Berkeley St, Boston, MA 02116.
- Cash and on-site payments are **not** accepted.
- Payments declined or returned by the bank will incur a \$10 processing fee that will be applied to the family's account and billed in the next invoice.
- Please email billing@ellisearlylearning.org if you have questions about invoices or payments.

Late payments

- Tuition must be paid in advance. Per EEC regulations, accounts more than **three weeks past due will result in termination of services.**

- Payments overdue for more than 2 weeks will result in a **late payment fee of \$25**.
- If a payment will be late, contact billing@ellisearlylearning.org immediately to discuss arrangements.
- Unresolved balances may lead to termination of services and referral to a collection agency.

Termination of enrollment

- When voluntarily terminating childcare at Ellis, please provide **one month's written notice before your child's last day**.
- Without the notice, you will be charged for the entire final month of care, regardless of end date.
- Any unpaid balance after withdrawal will be sent to a collection agency that may report it to credit bureaus.
- 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.

Thank you for your attention to these policies. We appreciate your partnership in keeping tuition and billing clear, timely, and consistent for all Ellis families.

CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT

Caregiver Participation

Caregivers and caregivers are critical stakeholders in helping their children gain the most they can from our programs. We encourage caregivers 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. Caregivers 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, caregivers 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 caregivers/guardians and staff. Caregivers 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 caregivers and staff is required per year for Preschool and BOSTON PRE-K. 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 caregiver/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 caregiver/guardians at the meeting and cannot be released without written permission from the caregiver 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. Caregivers/guardians and teachers need to cooperate with each other in order to provide what is best for your child. For this reason, **we expect caregivers/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 caregivers*

***Caregivers/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.**

Caregiver/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 caregivers 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 safe place of work and learning. The school is responsible for ensuring a safe environment. As such, certain limits must be set for caregivers/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 before 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.
- Smoke on school property

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. **Caregivers/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 caregival concern regarding a particular team member, it is strongly encouraged that the caregiver/guardian speaks directly to the staff member to resolve the issue. In the event that the caregiver/guardian feels uncomfortable, or the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved; the caregiver/guardian should meet with the Vice President of Programs. If this situation is still not resolved to the satisfaction of caregiver/guardian, a meeting should be set up with the Chief Executive Officer. The caregiver/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 caregiver/guardian threatens or harms another caregiver/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 caregiver/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.

CAREGIVER/CAREGIVER RIGHTS

Caregiver/Caregiver Notifications

If there is a change in policy and/or procedure in any program, caregivers 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 caregiver/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. Caregivers 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

Caregivers have the right to add information and relevant materials. Caregivers 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 caregiver's request or give caregiver a



written decision as to why not.

Records are available to caregivers 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 caregiver 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

Caregivers/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 require you to provide a copy so we can best support your child.

Research

Written consent will be obtained from the caregiver/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 caregiver/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 caregiver/guardian against another caregiver/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.

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 caregivers 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 caregiver/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 caregiver/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 Handbook complies with EEC requirements.

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

