Early Childhood and Family Center
Where Learning is Joyful

FAMILY HANDBOOK
2015

705 Gurley Avenue
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Prepared by
Judith K. Lavender, M.Ed.
Dear Families,

Welcome to University of New Mexico Gallup Early Childhood and Family Center (ECFC). We look forward to building a strong relationship with you and your child. This handbook is for you to use to learn about our program and policies. Our center provides care and education for children of UNM-Gallup students, faculty, and staff and the Gallup community. Our classrooms are used for faculty research, observation, and practicum. We work carefully and thoughtfully to provide joyful learning and a happy experience for you and your child. We encourage your involvement and hope you will visit often. We value you, your input, and your participation.

Please ask our site manager or your classroom teacher any questions that you have that are not addressed in this handbook. We look forward to a great year!

Our Early Childhood and Family Center follows UNM Gallup’s yearly schedule.

Thank you for trusting us with your child’s care!

Site Manager: Becky Romero  
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Administrative Assistant Jobie Lynn Herrera 505 863-7665

Preschool Lead Teacher

Toddler/Twos Lead Teacher

Infant/Toddler Lead Teacher

Child Development Associates Verla Kenneth  
Andrea Starks  
Kelvina Whitegoat  
Sharon Yoe

Cook

*To comply with the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, UNM provides this publication in alternative formats. If you have special needs and require an auxiliary aid, please contact Becky Romero, Site Director.
Our experience confirms that children need a great deal of freedom: the freedom to investigate and to try, to make mistakes and to correct mistakes, to choose where and with whom to invest their curiosity, intelligence, and emotions. Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes, and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds, and colors. They need the freedom to realize how reason, thought, and imagination can create continuous interweavings of things, and can move and shake the world.”

Louis Malaguzzi
Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio

Our children spend their days at the ECFC exploring, discovering, creating and questioning. They move freely about with thoughtful support from the teachers. The walls of our Reggio classroom are filled with images of the children’s activities and projects. Documented activities become part of our living wall giving families an opportunity to view every day what happens in the classroom.
From A Child’s Perspective

If you’ll help me to
Ask my own questions
Try out my own ideas
Explore what’s around me,
Share what I find:

If I have
plenty of time for
my special pace,
a nurturing space,
things to transform;

If you’ll be
my patient friend
trusted guide,
fellow investigator;

Then I will explore the world
discover my voice
and tell you what I know

author unknown
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Early Childhood and Family Center Overview

Mission
UNM Gallup Early Childhood and Family Center (ECFC) serves young children of students, faculty, staff, and community with care and learning using best practice and Reggio Emilia inspired approach to learning. It trains students and early childhood professionals in knowledge and research of early childhood development and education and raises community awareness of young children’s needs.

Vision
ECFC plans to become a comprehensive model for replication statewide in New Mexico. Best practice, family support, teacher training, and community outreach are key components. The center strives for 5-star rating and National Association for Education of Young Children accreditation.

Values
ECFC
• Treats all children with affection, dignity, and respect
• Uses best practice and Reggio Emilia inspired approach to learning
• Teams with parents—children’s first teachers—to support healthy growth and development for their young children
• Provides a safe and inspiring environment at school and promotes the same for home and community
• Has an open-door policy for local business people, professionals, and community workers to visit the school and engage children with their work or interests

Philosophy
ECFC believes in environments for intentional learning, self-directed learning, and Reggio Emilia inspired interaction between teacher and child. The school, the child’s second home, becomes a comfortable, safe, warm, engaging, and stimulating learning experience for the children and parents served. ECFC brings teachers and parents together as learning companions. They cooperate to inspire thinking using the child’s interests and to encourage disciplined emotionally intelligent children based on brain development research.
Goals
UNM Gallup Early Childhood and Development Center strives to accomplish the following:

For Children
• Provide children with the opportunity to make appropriate choices.
• Provide a safe, healthy, comfortable, responsive, and stimulating cognitive environment.
• Encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment through engagement with their peers, teachers, and environment.
• Respect, accept, and appreciate each child and the cultural heritage of that child.
• Provide learning experiences designed to promote physical, cognitive, emotional, and social growth using Reggio Emilia approach to learning and best practices for early learning.
• Maintain an environment free of racial or sex role bias, stereotype or prejudice.
• Respects, accepts, and appreciated each child’s strengths and cultural heritage.
• Provide assessments twice a year to recognize each child’s learning.
• Set limits that encourage emotionally intelligent choice and behavior

For Parents
• Provide high quality care for children while parents pursue their studies at UNM Gallup.
• Provide evaluations for their child’s developmental interests and strengths.
• Provide support for their child’s learning style.
• Provide opportunities to make connections with other parents
• Provide opportunities to learn and understand child development through planned support programs.

For Teachers
• Provide professional training to promote their life-long learning.
• Participation in State and National initiatives allowing for feedback and input on early childhood practice.
• Provide an outstanding work and early childhood environment that serves as a model for our community and state.
• Provide an environment for research, study, and training for UNM.

For the Gallup-McKinley County Community
• Create a strong partnership with families and clear communication about the importance of children’s early learning experiences.
• Provide a model for early childhood education and comprehensive child care services.
• Provide leadership in promoting best practice using views and research that support early learning.
• Provide leadership for high quality professional roles in early childhood
ECFC Joyful Learning

Approach to Learning
We use Reggio Emilia approach to learning recognized worldwide for its innovative approach to education. It embraces clear communication among children and teachers as they discover learning together. Children follow their interests with your appropriate support.

Children’s natural sense of curiosity and exploration expand in Reggio approach. Children are natural scientists and have time to research in depth if a project or subject holds their interest. Children guide their learning by expressing their interests and following them with intentional lessons supported the teacher. The interaction between child and teacher coupled with communication inspires curiosity and builds a natural and organic curriculum. Respectful relationships among teachers, parents, and children build and honor rights of others.

The Reggio Emilia approach believes that everyone in the community takes responsibility for supporting children, their families, and their learning.

• Children have control over their learning by having time to explore topics in depth.
• Children learn through experiences of touching, moving, listening, seeing, and hearing.
• Children build relationships with other children and with material items through exploration.
• Children have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

We believe children learn best through play—it is their work! We support children’s learning through play-based activities and by laying the foundation for joyful life-long learning. We identify each child’s interests and build on his/her interests through our child and teacher initiated, hands-on activities. Our daily learning plans provide a flexible framework for teaching and supporting each child’s current expressed interests. These varied interests help us shape learning plans around their interests rather than attempting to fit our children into a specified program. We emphasize opportunities for each child to develop positive attitudes towards learning, to develop competencies in verbal and nonverbal communication, to have opportunities to develop awareness and to respect diversity. This sensitive approach to learning develops a child’s innate abilities, creative thinking, and promotes reflective thinking.

Communication and Family Engagement
Your child’s teacher spends significant time every day with each child. You will receive a brief note, text, or photo from your child’s teacher most days with comments about the day. Each class maintains a logbook where every family can read about events that happened in the classroom.
Documentation of all the children’s work displayed throughout the classrooms shows ongoing activity. A monthly newsletter gives information about upcoming events as well as child development. A large bulletin board located in the main hallway posts all notices and regulatory information. UNM-Gallup has linked ECFC to the campus website.

ECFC promotes open communication by:
- Holding an orientation for parents and children
- Using a checklist of family engagement goals including family participation
- Preparing a family directory with photos and contact information
- Posting photos of children and their families in a special area
- Scheduling regular parent-teacher conferences
- Visiting each child’s home or meeting parents in an agreed upon place
- Using electronic devices such as smartphones for photos, daily events, and contacting parents
- Posting photos of teachers and their interests
- Giving time for conversation at drop-off and pickup times
- Having phone conversations when needed because face-to-face conversation is impractical

We request each parent to complete a questionnaire to assist with developing clear communication between home and school. The questionnaire focuses on communication, relationships, facility and program environment, support for cultural and linguistic diversity, parent involvement, and general satisfaction.

We connect families and school with:
- Potluck meals
- Sing-alongs and other music programs
- Festivals and celebrations incorporating families’ cultural heritage
- Family fun days
- Family learning about child development
- Open houses for families and community

**Community Collaboration**
Early Childhood and Family Center partners with community organizations that provide high quality service to children and families. We call upon our community partners for information and support for our staff, our children, and our families.

**Culture and Dual Language Awareness**
ECFC supports children who are learning more than one language in their early years through vocabulary expansion in the classroom for languages spoken at home and in English. Staff, parents, and teachers receive professional training about how children acquire language form birth to age five and how to foster its development. Awareness of other cultures and traditions occur naturally with young children and will be part of our classroom activities.
Emotional and Physical Health
Beginning with good nutrition and quiet eating time children learn the value of healthy eating. ECFC respects mothers who breastfeed and are welcome to come to the center between classes to feed their infants. Mother’s who bottle-feed their infants are invited to do the same. Knowing that feeding and holding builds attachment not only by the parent but also by the teachers and staff, infants will be held during feeding time until they are old enough to sit comfortably in a high chair. The infant environment provides opportunity for infants to roll over, sit up, stand, cruise, and ultimately stand up and walk.

Our well-trained staff knows infant and early childhood developmental milestones and guide development of ALL children based on your child’s needs. ECFC children explore learning both inside and outside and have flexibility to move about during the course of the day. The physical layout of the center allows for children to move from room to room with supervised engagement. Occasionally, teachers will have a switch day to give them opportunity to know children and families in other classrooms.

All children who attend ECFC must be immunized. A parent or family member must provide proof and ECFC will maintain up-to-date records in files. ECFC engages local dentists and pediatricians to promote regular dental visits, well-baby checkups, and timely immunizations for childhood diseases. Toothbrushes are provided for brushing after meals. You get resources and educational information about the importance of on-going dental checks and wellness checks to ensure healthy teeth and to support good health habits.

Food Gardens and Nutrition
Daily experience with food is an integral part of early childhood health. ECFC children grow, harvest, and clean food from our gardens. Our children participate at every level from starting plants from seeds, nurturing plants, and harvesting them when ripe. Our food garden helps to broaden your child’s thinking about food sources, how food grows, and how to sustain fresh food throughout the seasons.

A professional cook has responsibility for preparing meals aligned with quality nutrition as outlined in the US Child and Adult Food Care Program. Varied menus introduce different foods and create discussion about food characteristics. Our children learn to value and understand how good nutrition contributes to their growth.

Children actively participate in meal preparation. They set tables, create centerpieces and other table decorations from found materials and conversation in the classroom. Family style eating fosters learning about correct portions and eating a variety of foods building life-long skills of self-care.
**Inclusion**

All children and their families are members of our community. Our diverse population touches culture, ethnicity, learning styles, and mental and physical challenges.

NAEYC defines early childhood inclusion with the following policy statement:

*Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.*

The Reggio Emilia and best practice approach recognizes individual learning for each child. ECFC has wheelchair access for both indoor and outdoor learning. Based on research of Louise Derman-Sparks, children develop positive attitudes about their own identity and the differences of others through exposure to ideas and people and positive interactions.

ECFC’s environment…

- Uses images, sounds, textures, activities, and foods from diverse cultures
- Holds non-stereotypical images of different cultures, with a focus on current times, nonsexist images of men and women in nontraditional roles, and images of people with disabilities
- Models and supports friendships, nontraditional gender roles, and various family configurations
- Engages in respectful conversations with children about differences, helps them develop the language to talk about differences, and intervenes in biased behavior or language, without shaming.

Our staff and teachers receive training in preventing and addressing bullying and inappropriate teasing and physical aggression. They receive anti-bias training to guide your child towards inclusion. Teachers use peer mediators to initiate play for children that have special needs or identified social developmental needs. Other techniques such as improvisation and collective story telling foster inclusive interaction with all our children. With our shared family style eating, children sit by different children at each meal.

ECFC partners with appropriate community agencies for support when needed. Collaboration among families, specialists, and teachers coordinate and integrate our outreach efforts. ECFC may request referrals for developmental screenings when observations show that a child could benefit from specific developmental encouragement beyond what our classrooms can offer.
Towards the end of each semester your teacher reviews your child’s development and discusses transition to the next classroom with you. We help your child make the transition by visits to the new classroom prior to joining it.

**Outdoor Learning Space**
Young children experience outdoors differently from adults. Bringing the beauty of the environment to life for our children happens with freedom to explore and discover natural surroundings—rocks, sand, mud, and water…trees, flowers, bushes, and grass…slides, swings, trikes, and wagons—all opportunities for curiosity and discovery.

ECFC created a natural outdoor learning environment to support these ideas. Winding paths for walking and riding tricycles, shade trees and structures, playhouses strategically placed to create a sense of community, and large areas to play with sand, water, and paint invite play. Interspersed among the space children find native plants, scented gardens, and vegetable gardens. From crawlers to runners there is a space to explore.

A climbing structure with steps and slides encourages interaction, movement, and use of large muscles. Swings give a sense of gliding through space. Children run, ride, and climb, as well as hop on stepping stones, practice balance on a beam, hide from the sun on hot days under a shade tree, and stop to smell the flowers they plant. They learn about composting and sustainable garden growth. ECFC promotes recycling and repurposing in every age appropriate way.

The outdoor learning space invites creativity and imagination in each and every child. Often it is outdoors where children begin to learn empathy for living things such as bugs and plants. Also, they learn respect for dead creatures and plants—all necessary emotional skills for preschoolers.

**Research and Program Evaluation**
ECFC uses research to evaluate its effectiveness in fulfilling its strategic plan, teaching strategies, and overall impact on the quality of supporting learning for young children and support for families.

**Work is Play and Play is Work**
Research shows us that young children learn best through play. They explore and build important social skills. Through play your child observes, uses curiosity, and develops respect for the environment.

Block play encourages imagination and thinking, gives satisfaction from making something, teaches about size, shape, weight, balance, height, and depth. It encourages movement and play with others. Your child uses decision-making, visual discrimination and eye-hand coordination when stacking blocks.
When your child pretends he/she tries out different home, work, and life experience roles. He/she develops self-awareness, social development, and communication skills. Language and vocabulary get used. Puppet-play gives your child a chance to verbalize feelings using words. Puppets promote understanding of feelings of others and stretch imagination.

Art materials invite your child to learn about color, texture, and ideas thorough self-expression. They invite imagination, exploration of form and function, and use of small and large muscles.

Books encourage listening, building vocabulary, learning about concepts, people, and places. Books teach reading readiness skills, refinement of attention spans, and imagination.

Sand and water play relaxes, soothes, and gives opportunity to play alone while developing sensory awareness. Sand and water allows exploration about space, volume, and measurement. It encourages experimenting, questioning, problem solving and thinking creatively.

**ECFC Organizational Structure and Center Criteria**

**Academic Connections**

ECFC serves our students and faculty as well as our community for academic connections. We have a role in supporting faculty and student’s professional and educational goals. You, the parent should expect a high level of participation in approved research, observations, projects, and field experiences. Participation in these activities is a required condition of continued enrollment at our child care center unless an activity requires separate parental permission. If you feel strongly that your child does not participate in these activities, the site manager can recommend disenrollment and provide options for alternative child care arrangements that may better meet your family’s needs.

Activities may include, but are not limited to, practicum assignments, observations and projects, internships, student teaching placements, informal research, practice developmental and/or linguistic testing, mental/physical wellness experiences and the like. The level of involvement may include but is not limited to passive observations, active interactions, facilitating group activities/discussions and conducting practice tests. This may include photographing, audio taping, videotaping, collecting samples of children’s work and taking dictation of children’s words. If any of the research protocols should fall under the jurisdiction of the institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research we will ensure the researchers have taken the necessary steps. ECFC commits to providing these opportunities to faculty, students, and the community while also ensuring your child is in a safe and nurturing environment. Therefore, we will not permit any involvement that we feel will cause emotional distress,
and/or psychological/physical harm. All individuals involved in these activities must meet the standards and expectations of our program, which include completing an application for participation and meeting with the appropriate administrator. The procedures are designed to ensure that your child(ren) are properly protected and supported during the conduct of any study at ECFC.

Unless we have received specific separate permission from you, these individuals will not be left alone with any child or group of children at the center. As with other aspects of our program, the ECFC will always work to respect your child’s choice to participate.

Advisory Board
Our ECFC Advisory Board includes parents, staff, UNM Gallup ECE faculty, and early childhood specialists from various community agencies. Its purpose is to support open communication among staff, parents, UNM, and our community. It focuses on raising awareness on campus and in our community about quality early childhood experiences and family experiences. Fifteen individuals sit on the Advisory Board. Meetings are held every other month.

Accreditation, Licensing, and Insurance
New Mexico Children, Youth, and Family Department inspect and give ECFC its license. ECFC respects guidelines for accreditation from National Association for the Education of Young Children and FOCUS 5- star rating. A copy of the childcare regulations and current-state issued Operator’s License can be found on the hall bulletin board. Our licensed center keeps insurance coverage current for the premises, operation, property, and liability at all times with no lapse in coverage.

Best Practice and Developmentally Appropriate Practice
Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) as defined by National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) frames and guides best practice for the care and education of young children, birth through age 8. Grounded in research on how young children develop and learn as well as educational effectiveness, it promotes young children’s optimal learning and development.

Brain Research
From birth and throughout development a baby’s brain cells make connections that lay the foundation for their lifetime experiences. These critical first three years where neurons connect and synapses form lay patterns that allow voice recognition, a sense of feel, and ability to see and begin to discern faces and moving objects. The rhythmic firing of neurons is essential for the explosion of learning that happens in early childhood. ECFC commits to giving information to families and to the community about brain research and development to raise overall awareness of the value and importance of early childhood experiences.
FOCUS Criteria Overview
FOCUS promotes full participation of each child, health promotion and developmental screenings, support for professionalism through on-going training, and appropriate ratio of teachers to children in the classroom based on clearly defined space.

New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten
New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines (NMELG), divided into five domains of development reflects universal aspects of infant and toddler development. Regardless of ethnicity, language exposure, tribal affiliation, religious upbringing, or environmental differences, all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers fit into these domains. NMELG show how development is dynamic and integrated

Ethical Conduct
NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment
Early Childhood and Family Center staff subscribes to the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To obtain a copy of the code, you make your request to the site manage or visit NAEYC’s website www.naeyc.org.

Staff
Our site manager, lead teachers, and child development associates are full-time permanent employees of UNM Gallup. Each member of our teaching staff has a degree or certificate in Early Childhood. Each classroom team consists of a lead teacher, teacher assistant, and student staff. Some students are enrolled in student teaching practicum, laboratory experiences for early childhood education or may be staffing as work-study students.

Our teachers have daily reflection time for planning, regular staff meetings, and continuing professional training. Every classroom has staff with certification in CPR, infection control, and Pediatric First Aid.
ECFC Policies and Procedures

Admission
Three times a year we ask you to confirm a space for your child to help us determine how many slots will be available to families on the wait list. This pre-registration time occurs in June for fall semester, in November for spring semester, and in April for summer semester.

Enrollment is based on first come, first served for UNM Gallup students, faculty and staff and subject to available slots. If you have more than one child (siblings) to enroll in our center, you receive priority. To enroll you must complete registration forms and pay a non-refundable $25.00 registration fee. ECFC has copies of all forms in the office and will assist you with filling them out.

We have a family orientation at ECFC each semester. You are required to attend if you are a new family to ECFC or if you enrolled previously and did not attend one. You get an overview of ECFC policies and procedures and receive your family handbook at this time. You may request an electronic or printed handbook. We ask you to schedule a short classroom visit with your child before the first day of school.

Documents for Enrollment
The following 13 documents are needed for enrollment:

• Child Care Agreement
• Enrollment Form
• Copy of your child’s immunization Record
• Birth Certificate
• Activity and Emergency Form
• Photo Consent Form
• Notice of Observation Form
• Background Information Form
• Pediatric History Form
• Health Exam Form (completed by your child’s health care provider)
• Cultural Survey Form
• Class Schedule (for UNM-G students)
• Child and Adult Food Care Program Income Eligibility Application
• Sun protection permission Form

Nondiscrimination Policy
UNM Gallup does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, status, physical capacity or national origin. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director: Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue SW; Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call toll free 866-632-9992.
Tuition and Hours of Operation

We are a state licensed facility located on campus to serve current UNM-Gallup students, staff, faculty, and community residents. Our center complies with all New Mexico regulations governing childcare and education facilities. You may see a copy of the New Mexico regulations at any time by asking our director. Children are admitted as space allows without regard to race, religion, or nationality. ECFC is a model program and uses respected research, highly trained staff, and constant reflection of early childhood knowledge to promote each child’s early development. ECFC monthly tuition rates are based on days enrolled. All children must enroll for either ½ day or full day programs. Choices include:

- **Full day**: 8:00 AM to 5:45 PM
- **Half Day Morning**: 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM
- **Half Day Afternoon**: 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM
- **Extended Day for full day or afternoon sessions**: 4:30 PM to 5:45 PM

**INFANTS**

- Infant M-F _8 hours: $640.00
- Infant M-F _4 hours: $320.00
- Infant MWF _8 hours: $384.00
- Infant MWF _4 hours: $192.00
- Infant T-Th _8 hours: $256.00
- Infant T-Th _4 hours: $128.00

**TODDLERS**

- Toddler M-F _8 hours: $640.00
- Toddler M-F _4 hours: $320.00
- Toddler MWF _8 hours: $384.00
- Toddler MWF _4 hours: $192.00
- Toddler T-Th _8 hours: $256.00
- Toddler T-Th _4 hours: $128.00

**3-4 YEAR OLDS**

- 3-4 M-F _8 hours: $640.00
- 3-4 M-F _4 hours: $320.00
- 3-4 MWF _8 hours: $384.00
- 3-4 MWF _4 hours: $192.00
- 3-4 T-Th _8 hours: $256.00
- 3-4 T-Th _4 hours: $128.00

Extended Day monthly rate: $100.00
Assistance is available for those who show need. ECFC assists all families who qualify for CYFD subsidies or USCAFP assistance with information about how to apply. Please inquire at the center for this information.

We maintain a wait list and review and update it periodically. If you wish to remain on the wait list it is your responsibility to provide your current information to ECFC.

Three classrooms have learning opportunities for children from 6 months to 4 years old. ECFC has morning and afternoon sessions with choice to enroll for five days, three days, (M-W-F) or two days (T-Th). The center’s schedule coincides with UNM Gallup’s calendar and will observe all holidays and breaks that UNM-Gallup observes. Hours of operation are from 7:45 AM-5:45 PM on days it is opened.

A total of sixty slots are available for enrollment. Thirty children will be enrolled for morning sessions and thirty children will be enrolled for afternoon sessions. The enrollment slots available by age follow for each session:

- Infants (6-12 mos) 4
- Young Toddlers (13-17 mos) 5
- Toddlers (18-35 mos) 7
- Three-year olds 8
- Four-year olds 6

We encourage all our children to discover and explore without criticism or fear in making mistakes. We interact with all our children to help them learn how to cooperate with others.

**Billing**

Payment is due by the 1st day of the month and is considered late if it has not been paid by the 5th day of the month unless other arrangements have been made. Payments not made by the 5th day accrue a $25.00 late fee. No credit will be given for sick days. If you fall behind in making your monthly tuition payments you may lose your child’s slot.
**CYFD Child Care Assistance Guidelines**

All families who qualify for childcare tuition assistance must apply through the Children, Youth, and Families Department at the Child Care Services Bureau. Families are eligible for financial assistance if they meet the state low-income guidelines and need early childhood care and education to work, to look for work (TANF), or to attend employment training. If you attend school, you may also be eligible.

You are guaranteed childcare if you are on Public Assistance and need child care in order to meet any work participation requirements. If you left Public Assistance for a job and need childcare to go to work you are guaranteed assistance in paying for childcare for one year after leaving Public Assistance.

Eligibility is based on:

- Income
- Your reasons for needing day care
- Your child’s age and individual needs

Payment is based on:

- Income
- Family size
- How many children you have in child care.

Gallup Child Care Services Bureau

1720 E. Aztec

Gallup, NM 87301

505-726-8449

**You must have the following documentation:**

1. Current check stub if paid monthly or check stubs if paid bi-weekly or current check stubs if paid weekly.
2. If you have not been in a new job long enough to have the above check stubs, bring a letter signed by your employer with your hours, wages, start date, and telephone number.
3. Verification of any other income (child support, SSI, alimony, etc.)
4. Birth certificates for ALL children (even if you do not need child care for them.) You can get birth certificates at Vital Records Office at 505 841 4185
5. Social Security cards for ALL household members or a printout from the Social Security office with a social security number on it.
6. School schedule for adult household members
7. Picture ID for head of household
8. Verification of residency (lease agreement, utility bill)
9. Child care provider-name, address, telephone number (If provider is a private individual, please provide the person’s social security number.)
State-funded programs that require approval will be done so by our center director and a state caseworker.

**Fees**
All families must pay a $25.00 non-refundable registration fee at the beginning of each school year or upon enrollment. All tuition rates are based on an annual tuition divided into twelve equal payments.

Registration fees must be paid upon enrollment. It is your responsibility to pay any fees and to apply for recertification for benefits that you receive from other state or federal programs.

Keeping your fees paid insures that your child has a slot in the child care center.

UNM Gallup does not have an allowance for family vacations. If your child is enrolled at ECFC tuition is due during times of absence for family vacations or other personal reasons.

Any unpaid balance on the last day of classes may result in your grades being withheld and registration being cancelled. You will be unable to re-enroll your child for the next semester. Unpaid fees could keep you from enrolling for classes at UNM-Gallup.

**Returned Checks**
A $25.00 fee will be assessed to you for all returned checks.

**Immunizations**
*It is mandatory in New Mexico per state regulation that UNM Gallup has a copy of your child’s immunization record.* You must provide us with updated records when shots are given. Please notify our site manager if you have changes to your information.

We ask you to attend a parent orientation where you will receive your family handbook. You may request an electronic or printed handbook. We ask you to schedule a short classroom visit with your child before the first day of school.

The following 13 documents are needed for enrollment:

- Child Care Agreement
- Enrollment Form
- Copy of your child’s immunization Record
- Birth Certificate
- Activity and Emergency Form
- Photo Consent Form
- Notice of Observation Form
- Background Information Form
- Pediatric History Form
• Health Exam Form (completed by your child’s health care provider)
• Cultural Survey Form
• Class Schedule (for UNM-G students)
• Child and Adult Food Care Program Income Eligibility Application
• Sun protection permission Form

Withdrawal
If our staff and center finds it cannot meet the learning needs of your child ECFC will give you two weeks notice of disenrollment. ECFC reserves the right to dis enroll children for any of the following reasons:

• You fail to pay tuition on time or late fees. Non-payment by the 15th of each month is grounds for immediate termination of services unless you have made prior arrangements.
• If you provide false claims with regard to income statements for purposes of admission and tuition determination.
• If you fail to comply with center policies.
• If you fail to provide the required registration paperwork each semester by the end of the first month of classes (August, January, and June)
• If you fail to provide a complete health evaluation and immunization record within six weeks of enrollment.
• If you are chronically late in picking up your child
• If you are chronically late in bringing your child to childcare in the mornings.
• If your child is unable to adjust to a group childcare setting.
• If your child has continuous behavioral issues which are causing harm to other children or staff members. We will ask you to obtain other services to assist us in working with your child. If you do not follow through with this process, your child could be dis enrolled. Our site manager will help you seek assistance in the community.
• If you choose not to allow your child to participate in approved research, observations, projects, and field experiences as outlined in the Academic Connections section of this handbook.
• If the situation between divorced/separated parents becomes administratively disruptive to the Center, the site manager has authority to discontinue services.

We ask you to give a two week written notice if you intend to withdraw your child. By giving a two-week notice any payments made in advance by you will be refunded.

ECFC fees will continue to be charged to you until a written withdrawal notices is submitted or two-weeks of unpaid childcare fees have occurred. Your ECFC Agreement will be cancelled. If you think you should have an exception made for you, you must give your reasons in writing to the Business Office. If for any reason you must leave the center and dis enroll your child please give two weeks
written notice. You will not be given refunds for unused time. All fees and charges must be paid prior to withdrawal.

**Dis Enrollment from ECFC**
Your child will be dis enrolled for the following reasons:

- Our inability to meet your child’s needs
- Lack of current immunizations for your child
- Your failure to pay tuition
- If you have more than three late pick up notices in one semester
- If your child has five consecutive days without a phone call from you (parent). Your ECFC contract agreement will be cancelled.
- If you resist in meeting with your child’s teacher and/or our site manager to discuss concerns.

**Medical Issues**

**Allergies**
A doctor’s note is required for all food and other allergies (latex, pets, etc.) that your child has. It is your responsibility to inform the staff of this allergy. For your child’s safety, we must post this in the classroom for all staff members to see.

**Medications**
If your child is to be given any medication by the staff, a permission form must be completed. The medication must be brought in the original container and the container must have the name of the child on it and be current. The dosage and times to administer must be written clearly on the signed permission form ECFC will not give any medication NOT prescribed by a doctor.

Although sun block lotion is not considered a medication, we ask that you provide a container of sunblock for your child. We also require a signed release from you stating we may apply sun block lotion to your child. We strongly advise that sunblock be used throughout the year.

**Sickness**
We do not have staff or facilities to care for sick children. If your child is not well enough to participate in the full range of daily activities, including indoor and outdoor play, your child should stay home. New Mexico regulations state that a child with an oral temperature of over 101 will be sent home. Please keep your child home when he/she is ill with a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, pink eye, strep throat, ring worm, head lice or any other obvious illness. If your child becomes ill while at our center, you will be notified to pick up your child immediately.
You will be called if your child comes to school or develops symptoms of any of the following illnesses:

- Fever
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Colds. If your child has green or yellow discharge from the nose or has a lingering cough.
- Ear Infections Please see a physician and after your child has been on prescribed medication for 24 hours or more he/she may return to school
- Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) Please see a physician and wait to bring your child to school until he/she has been on prescribed medication for 24 hours or more.
- Lice (Pediculosis) Your child may return after treatment has eliminated the condition (usually 2 days of treatment. All signs of infestation must be gone
- Impetigo Your child may return to ECFC after being on medication for 24 hours or more or when sores are dry with no yellow crust and no longer oozing (7-10 days)
- Chicken Pox Your child’s pox must be totally dry and scabbed over before returning to ECFC.
- Ringworm, Athlete’s Foot, Cold Sores Your child may attend if the infected area is covered and is being treated
- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsakie) Your child may return with a doctor’s note.

Your child could be sent home if he/she is lethargic, sleepy, complains of headache and/or stomachache or shows any other behavior of illness.

If your child is sent home due to illness, your child may not return to school for 24 hours or until the specified time listed on the illness notice you will be give at the time you pick up our child. For some cases, a doctor’s clearance will be required before the child is readmitted. We will check your child for symptoms of illness when you return to the center. ECFC staff reserves the right to refuse service for a child who displays symptoms of illness and who may be infectious and/ or not able to participate in the daily activities.

Child Safety

Missing Child

UNM-Gallup Child Care Center takes every precaution for the safety of your children in our care. All staff will know the whereabouts of the children assigned to their care at all times. If a child is missing, the director and parents will be notified immediately. If necessary the police will be notified.
Parental Disputes
When parental disputes between separated or divorced parents/legal guardians involving your child occurs, please bring it to the attention of our site director immediately. It is our responsibility to provide your child with a quality early learning experience and to support their social and emotional well-being. ECFC will act as a neutral party and will not side with one parent over the other. UNM University Counsel may be consulted at any time to provide guidance and support to ECFC.

A child's pick-up and drop-off schedule often becomes a point of contention during parental disputes. Occasionally one parent/legal guardian will request that we not allow the other parent/legal guardian to pick-up or have access to their child. We cannot legally prevent a parent/legal guardian from picking up or having access to their child without appropriate court paperwork. Once court documents are submitted to ECFC they immediately override any of our center's paperwork. This includes standing orders.

In situation where court paperwork is on file but the court's intention is unclear, it is not the responsibility of ECFC to infer what the intention is. Parents/legal guardians will be required to provide clarification of the terms and conditions outlined by the court. This can be done by:

1. An agreed upon calendar that clearly states the days and times that each party is authorized to pick-up the child or
2. A court document clarifying the specific days and times that each party is authorized to pick-up and drop-off the child. At the discretion of the Director, the child may not be allowed to attend ECFC until an agreement has been reached and this documentation has been received.

If a parent/guardian violates the conditions outlined in the court paperwork as it pertains to ECFC or in anyway compromises the safety of the child other children and families in our program, or center staff; UNM Gallup security will be called immediately. Depending on the circumstances surrounding the incident, CYFD may be notified, too. We respectfully request that parents/legal guardians do not place the child, other children and families in our program, or ECFC in the middle of disputes.

Suspected Child Abuse
Our teachers and staff are familiar with the signs of abuse and neglect as described by the New Mexico Department of Children, Youth and Families. As required by New Mexico law, staff and teachers will report any known or suspected case of child abuse or neglect.
Confidentiality Policy
All information and records pertaining to your child and your family is considered
confidential and will not be given to any unauthorized person. Only information
that affects the daily well being of your child will be given to those working in the
classroom. The enrollment files of all children who attend ECFC are maintained
in the administrative area of our center. Access to your child’s file will be given to
the contracting parent as listed on the current contract, unless we receive written
notification otherwise. Any requests for court mandated information will be
honored accordingly, which may include review through UNM’s University
Council. Any requests for copies of your child’s record must be in writing. In
addition, we require a 24-hour processing time for each request.

Daily Routine and School Calendar Information

ECFC is open from 8:00 AM -5:45 PM Monday through Friday.

Daily Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Children Arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-11:15 AM</td>
<td>Children’s Interests Activities Indoors and Outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Snack Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 AM</td>
<td>Dismissal for ½ day children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 PM</td>
<td>Lunch for full day children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 PM</td>
<td>Arrival for ½ day afternoon children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 PM</td>
<td>Lunch for ½ day afternoon children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15-3:30 PM</td>
<td>Children’s Interests Activities Indoors and Outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>Snack Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-4:15 PM</td>
<td>Children’s Interests Activities Indoors and Outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
<td>Dismissal for ½ day afternoon children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:45 PM</td>
<td>Staff Dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30-5:45 PM</td>
<td>Extended Day Staff and Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:45 PM</td>
<td>Children Leave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your child is signed up for breakfasts he/she must arrive by 8:00 AM. We ask
that your child arrive at school no later than 8:15 AM. Please allow enough time
for your infant and toddler to say goodbye to you when you leave them at ECFC
and when you come for them. They need extra time to say goodbye and hello. If
your child will not be at school on a scheduled day, please call and let us know
by 8:30 AM.

You must sign your child in and out each day of attendance. No child will be
released to a person who is not on the authorized list in the child’s folder. We
must have verbal or written authorization for any changes to this list. No child will
be released to a person who appears impaired by drugs or alcohol.
Daily Arrival and Dismissal

Please fill out our *Standing Order for Pick-Up* form each semester to authorize individuals other than you to pick up your child. An authorized person picking-up your child must be 18 year or older. Written permission must be given to your child’s teacher if anyone other than those listed on your child’s standing orders is to pick up your child. In case of emergency, a phone call will be accepted before the other adult arrives to pick up your child.

**UNM-Gallup Child Care Center is open from 8:00 AM-5:45 PM Monday through Friday.**

If your child is signed up for breakfast he/she must arrive by 8:00 AM. Otherwise, we ask that your children arrive at school no later than 8:15 AM. Routines make children feel safe and help them transition from home to school. Please allow enough time for your infant and toddler to say goodbye to you when you leave them at ECFC and when you come for them. If your child will not be at school on a scheduled day, please call and let us know by 8:30 AM.

If both parent’s names are on the birth certificate, both have the right to pick up their child. Before access can be denied a parent whose name appears on a child’s birth certificate, a copy of a restraining order must be provided for your child’s folder.

If a staff member suspects the parent or a person authorized to pick up a child is impaired (functioning poorly or inadequately: consumption of alcohol results in an impaired driver) the staff will:

- Call 911 if necessary
- Call the UNM-Gallup Campus Security
- Wait to release your child will until a UNM-Gallup Security Officer determines the person is not impaired
- Call another person on the emergency contact list to pick-up your child

**Once you have signed your child out of his/her classroom, you are responsible for your child.**

**You must pick up your child by 5:45 PM. A late fee of $1.00 per minute past 5:30 PM will be charged and added to your childcare account.**

If you do not pick up by 5:45 PM our staff will attempt to locate you or an authorized individual to get your child. Failure to pick up your child will be treated, as an instance of neglect/abandonment and a report will be made to the state Children, Youth and Families Department. The UNM-Gallup Campus Police will be called to transport an abandoned child to Gallup Police Department; you will be notified by the Gallup Police Department.
**Discipline Policy**

We help prepare your child for school and life and want your child to show empathy, respect, and experience success. Respect for others and for property is a basic and important social skill. ECFC does not permit children to be abusive to themselves, to other children or to teachers. If your child hits, punches, kicks or is verbally abusive to anyone, the site manager will call you to meet with the teacher. Repeated offenses will cause disenrollment.

- Discipline shall be clear and understandable to your child. It will be explained at the time of discipline.
- Discipline includes positive guidance, re-direction, and the setting of clear limits that foster your child’s ability to become self-disciplined.
- Discipline practices encourage your child to be fair, respect people, and property and take personal responsibility for his/her action.
- Positive discipline may include brief supervised time away from the other children.
- Our discipline policy is posted and visible to you and to the staff.
- Our center prohibits the following
  1. Physical punishment of any kind.
  2. Withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom opportunities
  3. Abusive or profane language
  4. Any form of private or public humiliation
  5. Unsupervised isolation
  6. Any punishment that is hazardous to the physical, emotional, or mental health of your child

**Emergency Procedures**

A disaster preparedness plan is on file and you are welcome to read it. It is located in the lobby of ECFC. We have regular fire and disaster drills at our center. We teach the children to listen to the teacher’s directions. We assemble and count everyone and give first aid and comfort as needed. We stay with your children until you or someone of your choice can get to the center.

In case of an emergency that requires us to move children and relocate we will move to Gurley Hall at UNM-Gallup. In the event that ECFC must be evacuated, our administrative staff will take an emergency box with parent contact information with them. You will be notified once we are able to make contact with you so you can pick up your child.

**Environmental Hazards & Use of Pesticides**

Early Childhood and Family Center has measures in place to monitor and protect children and adults from environmental hazards such as air pollution, lead, asbestos, according to public health requirements. ECFC buildings have been tested and found to be free of lead and asbestos.
Field Trips
No child will be taken from the premises of ECFC without the consent of the parent. The parent that gives the child the permission to attend a field trip activity must sign written authorizations.

Meals and Snacks
ECFC participates in New Mexico Child Nutrition Program. All snacks and meals served are approved by CYFD. We serve breakfast, lunch, and snacks. The menus are posted weekly. We provide formula and cereal for infants and use Enfamil or Lipil or a similar generic brand. If you want a different formula for your child, you must provide it. State regulations do not permit any outside food to be brought to the center. Children may have allergies or other reasons to not have approved food. If your child is signed up for breakfasts he/she must arrive by 8:00 AM.

Birthday and Holiday Celebration
Our center acknowledges children’s birthdays and special holiday celebrations with music, appropriate cultural stories, and food.

School Closings
Our center follows the same calendar as UNM-Gallup for holidays and closings. Additionally, we follow the same policy as UNM-Gallup with regard to closing or late starts on snow days

Family Responsibilities

Alcohol, Drugs, Controlled Substances, Firearms, and Smoking
ECFC is a smoke free environment. Smoking is not permitted on the premises including in the facility and outdoor play areas. Smoking within the view of the children is prohibited. This includes your private vehicle parked in the lot. These items are prohibited on the premises or in vehicles.

Assessments and Evaluations
Your child’s teacher keeps a portfolio of your child’s experiences and progress in the classroom. You may review it anytime. The information in the portfolio includes formal education or developmental assessment and evaluations and anecdotal information contributed by the staff that works with your child. ECFC must use assessment and evaluations to maintain accreditation and 5-star rating. The information in the portfolios helps our teachers develop classroom activities to meet your child’s developmental needs and follow your child’s interests. These assessments and evaluations will be reviewed with you at parent/teacher conferences during the year. Your child’s work becomes treasures for you as you watch growth and development occur.
Clothing for your Child
Parents must supply diapers, wipes and extra clothing. Children that are being toilet trained should have two complete sets of clothing. Please dress your child in play clothes and comfortable shoes that can get dirty and are easily laundered. According to state law, children may not go barefoot indoors. If your child wears sandals, they need to bring socks to wear at naptime.

We go outdoors every day when weather permits. Please bring a change of clothing for your child. Extra clothing includes underwear, socks, pants, and a shirt. Infants and toddlers need to have at least 2 complete changes of clothing. Please mark all clothes with your child’s name. A small box such as a shoebox to hold the clothes works best.

Cell Phone Policy
We ask that you turn off your cell phone or leave it in your vehicle when you enter ECFC. We want to have conversation with you and your undivided attention when dropping off or picking up your children. The time spent with your children during drop-off and pick-up helps them feel secure.

Family Bulletin Board
We encourage you to check our parent bulletin board, use our parent message center, read our monthly newsletters, give attention to notes from our teachers and listen to verbal communication regarding your child. Periodically, we will post on the bulletin board our wish list of “needed items" for our art projects. You can help us by bringing in recycled items that might appear on the list.

Family and Living Arrangement Changes and Concerns
Changes in your life, family, living arrangements, or people who are important to your child impact your child. Feelings and behavior might change. Please share with us any changes that you think affect your child and that will change his/her behavior. Please schedule a time to meet with your child’s teacher to discuss your concerns. We may call request a meeting with you if we think we need to share information with you about your child’s behavior or feelings.

Family Teacher Conferences
At the end of each semester we will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your child’s growth and development. If you wish to talk to your child’s teacher about any concerns, please ask to schedule a private parent/teacher conference. Otherwise, please plan to talk to your child’s teacher at the beginning or at the end of the day.
Filing Complaints
ECFC strives for respectful interactions with parents. We hope you will feel comfortable sharing your concerns, questions, or suggestions directly with our Center Staff and particularly with your classroom teacher or the site manager. If you have concern or question regarding your child or your child’s classroom, please speak to your child’s teacher first, if you are not satisfied with the action taken, you may speak to the site manager. If you do not get your need met, you may write a formal letter to the Executive Director of UNM-Gallup.

Toys From Home
Your child may want to bring a toy or item from home to remind him/her of home or a loved one. If your child brings a toy from home we cannot be responsible for it and will ask your child to keep it in his/her cubby while in the classroom.

If your child “borrows” a puzzle piece, book, etc. from ECFC, please return the item promptly. We want to keep our materials and toys intact for all the children to use. We want children to be responsible for returning items that belong to the center.

Thank you for trusting us with your child!
We want to learn about your family, your child-rearing practices; and other information that you will share with us regarding language, culture, and religion. We like hearing your appreciation when our teachers do a good job! Share your thoughts with us! We encourage you to be involved in your child’s experience at ECFC and want you to feel that this is your center as well as your child's.