



ELIZABETH
MASCIA
CHILD
CARE
CENTER

Parent Handbook

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center (“EMCCC”). We thank you for choosing us to provide child care and early childhood education services to your family. We value the trust that you have placed in us and will work hard to continue to earn it every day your child is with us. We will do everything in our power to provide you with peace of mind each of those days. We look forward to what we are confident will be a positive and rewarding relationship with you and your child.

With the input and wisdom of administration, staff members, parents, and Board members, and with the legal assistance of the Pro Bono Partnership, this new parent handbook has been compiled to give you an overview of the things you might expect while your child is in our care. If you have questions about or beyond what you find here, please feel free to communicate them to your teacher or an administrative staff member. We welcome your questions, input, suggestions, constructive criticism, and active participation. We are all in this together.

Because we live in an ever-changing environment, EMCCC may modify this handbook at any time. When changes are made, EMCCC will notify parents of those changes.

HISTORY

The Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center was founded in 1968 as a not for profit corporation by a group of concerned citizens responding to a local need for organized child care. EMCCC has been continuously providing professional services in the Tarrytown community for more than forty years. The New York State Office of Children & Family Services is the licensor. EMCCC is a member of the Child Care Council of Westchester. Recently, EMCCC was recognized and honored as the organization of the year by the Sleepy Hollow/Tarrytown Chamber of Commerce.

Originally known as Day Care Center of the Tarrytowns, the name was changed to Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center in 1987 in honor of one of our founders and long-time Board members, Elizabeth “Libby” Mascia, a pioneer of organized child care in the Tarrytown area. After re-locating several times during the early years, EMCCC permanently settled at the site of the former Pennybridge School on Sheldon Avenue in Tarrytown and has now been there for more than twenty years caring for Toddlers, Preschoolers and School Age children.

PHILOSOPHY

The Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center seeks to make a positive difference in the lives of working families in Tarrytown, Sleepy Hollow and their neighboring communities by providing inclusive, accessible, community based, quality child care and early childhood education.

The children who are in our care will work toward: Independence, developing effective communication skills, problem solving, creativity, cooperation, positive attitudes toward learning, good health practices, becoming good citizens, showing respect for others and an overall appreciation of life.

EMCCC is responsive to the child care needs of our community with a health and nutrition program promoting active healthy children, an education and enrichment program promoting literacy and developmentally appropriate activities, a scholarship program promoting access to services, an inclusion program promoting integration for developmentally disabled children, a vast campus with playgrounds and ball fields, a family atmosphere, an active Board of Directors, experienced professional staff members, involved parents, strong community support, and a recognition of early childhood education as an integral part of the educational spectrum.

APPLICATION

Parents considering applying for admission to the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center are encouraged to make an appointment to visit us. A complete tour and overview are provided at that time by an administrative staff member. Ample time will be afforded to ask questions and to see if EMCCC is a good fit for the family and child.

For a child to be considered for admission, an application form must be completed and returned, and the application fee must be paid in full. Payment of the application fee guarantees placement on the appropriate active wait list according to the age of the child. It is not a guarantee of enrollment.

ADMISSION

The Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center, dedicated to a policy of non-discrimination on any basis, is open to all children between the ages of 12 months and 12 years.

For children with special needs, EMCCC will work with the parents to determine what accommodations may be necessary. The program will comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If any child seeking enrollment in the program has or in the future is identified as having a disability covered under the Act, EMCCC will assess the ability of the program to meet the needs of the child. If EMCCC can meet the needs of the child without making a fundamental alteration to the program, it will do so.

When an opening in a classroom becomes available, that opportunity will first be offered to the sibling of an enrolled child at the top of the wait list for that particular age group. If there is no sibling of an enrolled child on the wait list for that particular age group, the opportunity will be offered to the child at the top of the general wait list for that particular age group. For admission to be secured, a security deposit equal to one full month of tuition must be paid upon acceptance of the open opportunity. The tuition payment for the first month of child care, in addition to the security deposit, must also be made in advance of the projected start date.

The intake process will follow. It will be done with an administrative staff member. This will give you further opportunity to ask questions, to meet the teacher, to share important information about your child, to visit the classroom and prepare for the first day. There are also several documents in addition to the Application form that must be completed and returned to the office prior to that first day at the Center for your child. They are as follows:

- Escort card/pick-up list (indicating the adults permitted to pick up your child)
- Emergency information card (indicating contact information should your child need medical care or if some other emergency arises, indicating consent, or not, for your child to take part in local neighborhood trips, and indicating consent, or not, to transport via ambulance and treat your child in the case of medical emergency)
- Policy statement (listing various important EMCCC policies regarding parent responsibilities)
- Department of Health – USDA form (The United States Department of Agriculture provides funding to EMCCC for our meals and snacks based upon the information provided on these forms.)
- Medical form and Immunization information (showing immunization records and a physical examination, including lead screening, completed within one year)
- Intake form (containing important information about your child that will be shared with the teacher)
- Written medication consent form (This form is completed by a licensed authorized prescriber and by the parent/guardian and by EMCCC, and is required only if a child is to receive a medication that will be administered by certified staff members at the Center. When a topical over the counter ointment is to be administered at EMCCC, the form is completed by the parent/guardian and EMCCC.)
- Media release form (giving your permission for photographs to be taken of your child while in care)
- Payment agreement/Fees and other costs agreement (indicating your agreement to pay tuition and fees according to EMCCC requirements)
- Scholarship application (This form is required only if a parent is applying for an EMCCC scholarship. If so, it must be accompanied by documented proof of household income.)

All of these forms will be kept on file and are updated yearly. All emergency information must be kept current. An administrative staff member must be informed promptly when phone numbers, addresses or authorized persons change.

During the intake process, the teacher will tell you what you need to bring to the group on the first day. This may include: diapers (if necessary), a complete change of clothes (appropriate to the time of year), napping sheet, blanket and pillow, sun-screen, diaper cream.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information kept in each child's folder is considered confidential and is secured in a locked area. This includes all admission documents and annual updates, progress reports, and any other materials specific to the individual child. This information is only for the use of the parent, teachers and administrative staff members. No information is released from a child's record without written consent from the parent or guardian or if otherwise required by legal process. As licensor, the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) is legally entitled to review any records kept at the child care center including the individual files of the children. EMCCC cooperates fully with OCFS and will release those records to OCFS without further parental notification or consent. Information about any child in the program will be given to the social services district if the child receives a day care subsidy from the district, where the child has been named in a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment or as otherwise allowed by law.

All family information including financial, health, or other personal matters will be considered confidential.

HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

The Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center is open Monday through Friday from 7am until 6pm 12 months each year. There are generally 14 days closed each year for holidays and staff training requirements. There may be a few unscheduled days closed each year due to dangerous weather conditions, as determined by the Executive Director. A listing of days EMCCC is scheduled to be closed during the year is customarily distributed to parents by early December and is posted on Center bulletin boards. Closing days are also indicated on the monthly activities calendars provided to all parents.

Children will not be accepted before 7am. If a child is picked up after 6pm, a fee will be charged at the rate of \$ 1 per minute late. It is understood that emergencies can delay pick up, but late arrival following work is strongly discouraged because it creates a very long day for a young child. Two staff members are always present to care for the children until they are picked up regardless of the time. For that reason, late fees must be charged to cover expenses. If a child is not routinely picked up by 6pm, services may be suspended until adequate arrangements for timely pick up are made.

Children attending fewer than 5 days per week are to come on their regularly scheduled days only. Switching days or paying for extra days is not always possible and is discouraged. Any such requests must be made to the teacher and approved by an administrative staff member to ensure that required staff member to child ratios are not exceeded.

SECURITY

Parents and staff members may come in to the Center by entering a code on a keypad that will allow the front door to open. All other visitors must ring the bell and state their business. If allowed entry the visitor must sign a visitor's log and will be continuously monitored while in the Center. All visitors will sign out when leaving.

PROGRAMS

New York State Office of Children & Family Services requirements regarding the required ratio of staff members to children and the maximum allowed sizes of groups are followed for all programs. All children will be supervised at all times by qualified staff members according to those same requirements.

Toddlers (12 MONTHS – 36 MONTHS)

Toddler services are provided in a secure and stimulating environment with a focus on socialization. There are three mixed-age Toddler groups. Two are for Toddlers ranging in age from 12 – 36 months. The other is for 18 – 36 month olds. Children learn to interact with their peers in small groups. Learning is promoted through sensory experiences. Social, cognitive, language and motor skills are developed. Toddlers receive the individualized attention they need to feel successful with each activity. Toddlers are encouraged to feed themselves and are introduced to all foods. Toddler teachers work closely with parents on toileting. Most Toddlers are out of diapers by the time they move up to the Preschool program, and it is strongly encouraged, but it is not a requirement. Age appropriate and individually and developmentally appropriate curriculum is followed.

Typical Toddler Daily Schedule

7am – 9am:	Arrival/free play
9am:	Breakfast
9:30am:	Group time (music, books, songs, movement activities)
10am:	Diapers/toileting, art, puzzles, small motor activities
10:30am:	Outside (playground or walks)
11:30am:	Lunch prep
11:45am:	Lunch
1pm – 3pm:	Nap on Cot
3pm:	Diapers/toileting
3:30pm:	Snack
4pm:	Outside play or free play activities inside
6pm:	Close

Preschool (3 YEARS – 5 YEARS)

At the Preschool level, class sizes are a little larger than Infant and Toddler groups. There are three preschool groups. One of the two three year old groups is an Inclusion program, a collaborative classroom for preschoolers, some with disabilities, operated with the Children's School for Early Development. The third group is for four year olds getting ready for kindergarten. All preschool services are provided with a focus on developing foundation skills needed for future educational success. Learning is combined with fun. Preschoolers go on occasional educational field trips. Positive peer interaction along with the development of a strong self-image and self-confidence are important goals at this level.

Typical Preschool Daily Schedule

7am – 9am:	Arrival/free play
9am:	Breakfast
9:30am:	Circle time
10am:	Learning centers – blocks, house corner, computer time, arts and crafts
11am:	Outside play
11:45am:	Music
12pm:	Lunch prep/bathroom
12:15pm:	Lunch
12:45pm:	Story
1pm – 3pm:	Nap on Cot
3pm:	Bathroom
3:15pm:	Snack
3:30pm:	Outside play or free play activities inside
6pm:	Close

Before School (5 YEARS – 12 YEARS)

This program is offered to school-aged children attending the public schools of Irvington and Tarrytown as well as a few area private schools. Child care and breakfast are provided to participating children until they are picked up to go to school by transportation provided by the school districts, as arranged by the parents.

After School (5 YEARS – 12 YEARS)

This program is also offered to school-aged children attending local schools. Children are dropped off at EMCCC each afternoon by transportation provided by the school districts, as arranged by the parents. Children are given time to work on their homework and other school assignments and are given assistance with homework to the extent possible, and participate in group activities. Children receive an afternoon snack. The After School program makes full use of the outdoor facilities each day, weather permitting. Full day services are offered when public schools are closed or dismiss early, except on days when EMCCC is also closed.

Typical Afterschool Daily Schedule

2:15pm – 3:30pm:	Arrival
	Snack (upon arrival)
	Homework
	Indoor activity
	Outdoor play
5:30pm:	Clean up
6pm:	Close

Summer School Age Program (5 YEARS – 12 YEARS)

The Center offers a full day summer program for school-aged children during July and August. Activities include: arts and crafts, dance, music and theater, educational activities including a summer reading program, bowling, swimming, museums and other field trips.

Enrichment Program

The Enrichment program consists of regularly scheduled special offerings focusing on science and nature, music and movement/exercise, and educational field trips. Visiting instructors are brought in to work with the children and to provide staff instruction to ensure that follow up activities are designed and implemented. We hope to broaden the horizons of the children by exposing them to a variety of educational and artistic experiences. At the same time, these programs are designed for the children to have fun while they learn. Enrichment activities are posted on the monthly events calendar.

SEPARATION

When your child first gets started at EMCCC, he or she might find it difficult to separate from you. This differs from child to child, with some becoming immediately comfortable with the new situation and others taking several days, sometimes weeks, to feel at ease. The transition from home to the child care center is often equally difficult for the parents. Staff members are sensitive to this and understand that it takes time for everyone to feel comfortable with new people, places and routines. Children and parents will get the attention and support they need to make a smooth transition from new enrollee to Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center veteran.

The initial reaction of a child getting started is often unpredictable and unexpected. Since each child is different, individual parents will work out a schedule with the teacher mapping out the first couple of days. Parents should plan on missing time from work to be at the child care center, possibly half days, on the first 2 to 3 days of enrollment while the child becomes comfortable in the new environment. The first day or two will likely be partial days for the child with no nap included. Developing a consistent routine of drop off and pick up is also important to the development of peace of mind for the child. The office should be called if there is a change in drop off or pick up time or if your child will be absent so the teacher can prepare to address any ensuing issues.

ROOM TRANSITION

Moving to the next class usually happens in September, but not always. Moving at another time is based on a combination of the child's needs, the child's date of birth, space available in each classroom and parent and teacher input regarding readiness.

Many factors come in to play when determining classroom placement for a child at EMCCC. Those factors include, but are not limited to, the availability of a classroom opportunity to accept a new child, the need to separate certain children, the need to keep certain children together, the behaviors and supervision needs of the children in a classroom, the numbers of boys and girls in a classroom, the point of development and personality of the child, EMCCC staff input, parental input. After carefully weighing all of the elements that come into play regarding each individual child, a final determination is made regarding placement. With all the factors that must be weighed, it cannot be promised that parental preference of one room over another will be honored, yet we are certain in the end that parents will be delighted with the services they ultimately receive regardless of the room placement.

Once the room placement has been decided and the targeted move in date has been chosen, the teacher will meet with you to discuss how your child will transition from the current classroom to the new one. It is usually done by way of a series of daily visits; gradually increasing in length, over a short period of time in advance of the official move in date. The comfort level of the child will determine the length and intensity of the transition. You will also have the chance to meet with the new teacher and to have all of your questions answered regarding this move. It is our goal to work together to allow for a smooth transition for your child and for you. Parents do not usually have to be present at the Center during the transition process from one room to another.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

When your child is brought to the Center, he or she must be escorted to the classroom by the accompanying adult. EMCCC cannot assume responsibility for a child if he or she has not been accompanied inside the building and brought to the classroom. Upon arrival at the classroom, the accompanying adult must sign the daily attendance log with a complete signature, first and last name, and a notation of the arrival time and must make sure that the staff member is aware that your child has arrived. This must be done every time your child is brought to the Center.

Your child will only be released to you or an adult authorized by you on the ***Escort Card/Pick up List***. Your child will not be released to someone who is not on that list without your authorization. If anyone other than you or an adult listed on the ***Escort Card/Pick up List*** will be picking up your child at any time, you must call the Center and send in an authorization notice (fax or e-mail are allowed). That person, or any person unfamiliar to the staff members on duty, should be prepared to show identification upon arrival at EMCCC. You will be called immediately if there is any question regarding the authorization of the person attempting to pick up your child. You or the adult picking up your child must come to the classroom and sign the daily attendance log in the same manner as is done at the time of arrival and must make sure that the staff member is aware that your child is leaving. If you or the adult picking up your child arrives after closing time, a late pick up log must also be completed and signed by that adult.

EMCCC must grant equal access to the child to both parents, if both have legal custody (which is generally assumed absent a court order stating otherwise). If a parent has been denied access or granted limited access to a child via court order, we must secure documentation to that effect, and maintain a copy on file. We must comply with the terms of the court order. Please do not ask us to “change days” or otherwise modify the process set forth in the court order. We can only make changes upon entry of a new court order that supersedes the prior order.

If you, or an adult authorized by you, fails to pick up your child at the time of closing and we have not heard from you, or someone authorized by you, we will ensure that your child is supervised at all times. The staff members on duty will continue to attempt to contact you. If there continues to be no communication beyond closing time, the Executive Director, or designee, will determine the steps that will be taken, including the possibility of contacting appropriate legal authorities, to seek assistance in caring for your child until you or an adult authorized by you is able to pick him or her up.

No child will be released to any authorized adult appearing to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the staff members on duty, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual. In such an instance, the staff members on duty will inform the Executive Director, or designee, who will determine the steps that will be taken, including an attempt to contact the child’s other parent or an alternative adult authorized by the parent. If we are unable to make alternate arrangements, we may contact appropriate legal authorities to seek assistance in caring for the child.

Up until approximately 8:30am the Toddlers may all be gathered in one classroom. The same may be true for the Preschoolers. This will be done up to the time the number of children present reaches the maximum group size allowed for that age group. The same may happen in reverse during the afternoon after 4:30pm. This allows us to meet the staffing requirements needed even when there are fewer children in the building and allows your child to spend time with the other children and staff members at the Center beyond those in his or her regular group.

Make it a point at arrival time and dismissal time to check your child’s cubby or mailbox for any correspondence or art projects to be taken home or for other important information.

DAILY HEALTH CHECK

A daily health check is done when your child initially arrives at the classroom and occurs throughout the day. During customary daily interactions the teacher will check if your child's behavior is typical or atypical for time of day and circumstances. Your child's appearance including skin (typical, pale, flushed, rash), eyes, nose and mouth (typical, unusual color; dry or discharge, rubbing), and breathing (normal or different) will be checked. Upon arrival, or at the earliest convenient time, there should be a discussion with the teacher regarding anything out of the ordinary your child may be experiencing regarding behavior at home, sleeping, eating drinking, bowels and urine, and if your child is due for a diaper change. The teacher should be informed if your child is receiving any medication or treatment. The teacher will check for any evidence of injury or illness or any indications of child abuse or maltreatment since your child was last participating in child care. Any unusual findings will be documented by and shared with you by the teacher. Your child may be excluded from the program if her or she appears ill.

MEALS AND SNACKS

The Center provides all of the food children will need during the course of the day. USDA guidelines for early childhood programs are followed. Breakfast and afternoon snack are prepared by EMCCC staff members. Lunch is brought in daily by an excellent experienced school caterer. A wide variety of healthy and appealing food items including whole grain breads and crackers and fresh fruits and vegetables are offered. Menus are posted weekly in the classrooms. Menus are given to individual parents upon request. Of course we need to know of any special dietary issues so they can be accommodated. We ask that you not bring in food for your child to eat in the morning. More often than not it won't meet our nutritional standards, other children will likely want some, and it creates an additional task to monitor by the staff members during a particularly busy time. The Center is peanut free. We serve no items containing nuts and ask that party items brought in also have no nut products. School aged children are provided with all meals regularly offered at the Center during the times they are present.

Sample Menu

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
BREAKFAST	Rice Krispies Fruit Milk	Waffles Fruit Milk	Cheerios Fruit Milk	Bagels Cream Cheese Fruit Milk	Corn Flakes Fruit Milk
LUNCH	Chicken Cutlet Rice Bread/Butter Broccoli Apple Milk	Cheese Ravioli Green Salad Bread/Butter Orange Milk	Turkey on Whole Wheat Pasta Salad Banana Milk	Meatloaf Mashed Potatoes Bread/Butter Green Beans Watermelon Milk	Moussaka Greek Salad Bread/Butter Pineapple Milk
SNACK	Fruit Juice Cheese Crackers	Fruit Juice Graham Crackers	Fruit Juice Cookies	Fruit Juice Nutrigrain Bars	Fruit Juice Hummus Whole Wheat Pita

NOTE: *Toddlers receive whole milk. Preschoolers and School age children receive 1 % milk.*

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A complete copy of the EMCCC Health Care Plan is readily available in the office for parents to review upon request. All relevant information about health, exclusion from the program due to illness, and medication distribution is included.

Upon admission each child must have a report of a physical examination including lead poison screening and record of immunizations completed by a health care provider. That report will include a notation that the child is free from contagious and communicable diseases and is able to participate in day care. Thereafter, a report of a physical examination will be completed annually. For children two years of age or younger, immunization records will be updated every three months. For children between two and five years of age, immunization records will be updated every six months. Physical examination reports and immunization records are reviewed by a nurse. The nurse will request updated reports as they are coming due.

The Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center can care for a well child or a mildly ill child but not a moderately ill child. A mildly ill child has symptoms of a minor illness, which does not represent a significant risk of serious infection to other children. A minor childhood illness is one that is not designated as a communicable disease requiring exclusion by the New York State Department of Health. A mildly ill child can participate in the regular program activities with some minor modifications, such as more rest time.

You will be contacted and your child will be excluded when symptoms of moderate illness as listed below are present. Since the well being of your child and the other children in the group are the primary concerns, a prompt pick up is encouraged for the benefit of all. In some instances your child will be kept away from the other children, but always supervised by a staff member, until he or she is picked up in an attempt to prevent the further spread of illness to other children or adults.

A moderately ill child should not be brought to the Center. If your child is moderately ill and staying home for the day please call and let the office know during the morning hours. Also let the office know about the nature of the illness so that other children can be observed for symptoms and other parents can be notified, if appropriate.

Symptoms of Moderate Illness, as indicated by the New York State Department of Health, are:

- The illness, or your child's reaction to it, requires more care than staff can provide or compromises the health and safety of other children
- Signs and symptoms of possible illness such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, persistent abdominal pain, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs until a medical examination allows inclusion
- Persistent diarrhea, defined as three or more stools in a 24 hour period, when the pattern represents:
 - An increased number of stools compared to your child's normal pattern
 - Increased stool water
 - Diarrhea accompanied with symptoms of dehydration, such as sunken eyes, dry skin, concentrated urine or small amounts of urine, fewer than 6 wet diapers in a 24 hour period, or no urine in 4 hours
 - Diarrhea accompanied with blood in the stool
- Significant fever as defined below, until evaluated and approved for inclusion by a health professional:
 - Children over 6 months of age should be excluded and referred to a health professional whenever fever is accompanied by a behavior change, stiff neck, a rash, unusual irritability, poor feeding, vomiting or excessive crying. Fever means:
 - Oral temperature above 101 degrees Fahrenheit;
 - Rectal temperature above 102 degrees Fahrenheit; or
 - Axillary (armpit) temperature above 100 degrees Fahrenheit

- Undiagnosed rash, with the exceptions of diaper rash and rash that is present in only a small area and is not accompanied by any other signs of illness, particularly in the diapered area of a child
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) until symptoms have resolved, or until 24 hours after medications have been administered, or approved inclusion by a health professional, or grouped in a room only with other children with conjunctivitis
- Untreated infestations, such as scabies or lice
- Vomiting 3 or more times in a previous 24 hour period, or any vomiting accompanied by symptoms of dehydration or other signs of illness
- Contagious stages of chicken pox, until 6 days after the onset of rash or until all sores have dried and crusted, unless children are grouped in a room only with other children with chicken pox
- Any of the following illnesses until approved for inclusion by a health professional:
 - Mouth sores with drooling, or Herpetic gingivostomatitis, an infection caused by the Herpes simplex virus
 - Diarrhea due to Shigellosis, Salmonella, Campylobacteriosis, Giardiasis, E. coli type 0157:H7, Versinia, Cryptosporidiosis, until there is one negative stool test obtained at least 48 hours after treatment (if prescribed) is completed; or unless a plan for grouping children has been approved by the local or State Health Department
 - Active tuberculosis, until treatment has been initiated and readmission has been approved by the local health unit
 - Impetigo, until 24 hours after medical treatment has been initiated unless there is only a small patch of Impetigo that can be cleaned and covered so no other children can come into contact with the sore
 - Strep throat, or other streptococcal infections elsewhere in the body until 24 hours after the initial antibiotic treatment
 - Mumps, until 9 days after onset of gland swelling
 - Rubella (German measles) and measles, until 5 days after onset of the rash
 - Hepatitis A viral infection (Infectious hepatitis) until one week after onset of illness, and until immunoglobulin has been administered to appropriate children and staff, or as directed by the local health unit
 - Shingles, if sores cannot be covered by clothing or a dressing or until sores become crusted
 - Pertussis (whooping cough), until 5 days of a total course of 14 days of antibiotic treatment has been completed
 - Diphtheria, until readmission has been approved by the local health unit
 - Hepatitis B, until readmission has been approved by the local health unit
 - Meningitis or meningococcal disease, until readmission has been approved by the local health unit
- Other illness or symptoms as determined by the Center

In the case of a medical emergency with your child requiring more than first aid, 911 will be immediately called for assistance. You will also be called. If necessary, your child will be transported by ambulance to a hospital (likely Phelps Memorial Hospital or Westchester Medical Center) accompanied by a staff member provided adequate staffing is available to supervise the remaining children in the group so that staff to child ratios can be maintained. The child's folder containing the medical record and emergency treatment card will accompany the child to the hospital. EMCCC will not provide transportation.

- Medication can be administered by trained and certified staff members while your child is at the Center only when both the Physician and the parent correctly complete the ***Written Medication Consent Form***. Medication must be in the original container with the original label with all identifying information as dispensed by a Pharmacist. When a topical over the counter ointment is to be administered at EMCCC, the form is completed by the parent/guardian. Topical over the counter ointments must also be in the original container with the original label.

Please let us know if your child is receiving medication at home so the teacher can monitor him or her for side effects like diarrhea, irritability, lethargy, or others.

All staff members trained and certified to give out medication are also trained and certified in Infant and Child First Aid and CPR.

Fire drills are conducted regularly. The children are taught to evacuate the building, always with staff member supervision, in a safe and orderly manner when the alarm sounds. Children are given the assistance needed according to their age and developmental levels to safely evacuate.

In the event of an emergency evacuation resulting in the inability to re-enter the building due to unsafe conditions, the Executive Director will make arrangements for the children to be transported safely to another nearby location until the children can be picked up by their parents who will be promptly contacted.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

New York State Office of Children & Family Services requirements regarding employee screening and employee qualifications (educational and experiential) are followed for all staff members.

The EMCCC staff consists of an Executive Director, Assistant Director, Office Manager, Teachers and Assistant Teachers. The Executive Director is responsible for the administrative oversight of all EMCCC programs and services. Assistant Teachers and Teachers report directly to the Assistant Director and finally to the Executive Director. Each classroom is staffed with a Teacher and one or more Assistant Teachers according to required staff member to children ratios for that particular group and the needs of the individual children.

There is a balanced mix at EMCCC of several long time staff members with ten or more years of dedicated service, middle length staff members and newer staff members. With this even balance we are able to preserve the history and traditions of the Center while being equally responsive to what is new and progressive in the field of child care and early education. Several staff members have or had children enrolled at EMCCC. A few staff members once attended the Center.

All staff members receive ongoing mandatory and supplemental professional training each year in prescribed topics related to child care and early education. All staff members meet regularly to plan program activities, discuss the needs of the children, and to address anything of importance regarding the Center.

Volunteers are regularly used at EMCCC. The Board of Directors and the Advisory Board volunteer their time, community members volunteer in the office, others volunteer their expertise for specific projects, high school students often complete community service hours at EMCCC, and students from local colleges and other institutions complete hours for their required internships in early education programs. Senior adults with developmental disabilities volunteer regularly as part of an intergenerational program partnership with Young Adult Institute. Parents and other family members are always welcome to volunteer.

New York State Office of Children & Family Services requirements regarding volunteer screening and supervision are followed for all volunteers present when the children are at the Center.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Referrals regarding community resources and supportive social services are provided to parents upon request.

EMCCC does not provide or offer any clinical services such as Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, or Physical Therapy but you can make arrangements for your child to be seen at the Center by a therapist you've engaged during regular operating hours. If you do make arrangements for your child to be seen at the Center by a therapist, please inform the teacher of the name of the therapist, the service or services your child will be receiving and the days and times the therapist will be at the Center. This helps us avoid scheduling conflicts for your child and his or her class during therapy sessions.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As a not for profit organization, EMCCC is governed by a Board of Directors. The Executive Director is selected by and reports directly to the Board of Directors. The EMCCC Board is comprised of concerned community residents including the parents of a few EMCCC children. All Board positions are voluntary. Regular Board meetings are held throughout the year. The EMCCC Board is vital and active and, like the staff, is comprised of several long term, middle length and newer members dedicated to preserving and promoting the integrity of the Center. In addition to providing oversight and advocacy, the Board actively fundraises throughout the year with events and appeals in support of the Center and its programs. Funds are used for the scholarship fund and enrichment activities. Parents are encouraged to participate in Board fundraising events including the fall Gala and are notified in advance when they are coming up.

COMMUNICATION

Open and frequent communication is very important. You are encouraged to talk often to your child's teacher. The better we communicate with each other, the better we are able to care for your child. There is a correspondence log in each classroom to write messages to the teacher, if needed, if she is not present at the time you come to the room to pick up or drop off your child. Administrative staff members are available to answer your questions or to address your needs as well. Feel free to drop in or make an appointment, make a phone call, send an e-mail, whatever works for you. We maintain an open door policy.

Parent/teacher conferences can be requested and scheduled at any time according to the needs of your child, and are regularly scheduled twice each year in the fall and spring. Teachers prepare written evaluations based on classroom observations and interactions to be shared at the twice annual conferences. You are encouraged to attend those conferences so that we can be sure that we are doing all we can to meet your child's needs.

A monthly calendar of EMCCC events is given to each parent. It includes enrichment activities, days closed, fundraising events, and anything else that is important for that month. The calendar is also posted on the bulletin boards in the Center.

We ask that you let us know in advance when your child will be on vacation or away from the Center for any other reason so the teacher can plan accordingly.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Licensed child care centers are required to establish discipline guidelines. The following is the ***EMCCC Discipline Policy Statement*** presented in the format designed by New York State Office of Children & Family Services. In addition to parents of children in care, all employees, substitutes, and volunteers at EMCCC must be informed of the content of these guidelines. Discipline will be directed, administered and supervised only by EMCCC staff members.

1. How is your program helping children develop self-control and learn acceptable forms of social behavior?

We teach peaceful, non-violent negotiated solutions to conflicts and in problem solving. We promote this approach in our classrooms at all times. Positive discipline is the method by which children learn self control and to assume responsibility for their actions. The process of learning self-control and accepting responsibility is an important part of the overall curriculum.

2. What are your program's expectations for the behavior of children?

We work diligently with the children to not hurt other people or destroy property. Additionally, we work with the children to not strike, scratch, bite, or kick each other or any adult. We work with the children to use language that is respectful of others.

3. How do you and your staff share these expectations with the children?

Clear and consistent age appropriate and developmentally appropriate limits and rules are set and observed within each classroom group in order that children learn to compromise, negotiate, and wait turns, and eventually share and play cooperatively. This is done by frequently and consistently talking, explaining, and setting a positive example with the children.

4. How do you and your staff help children resolve conflicts?

Adults appropriately modeling positive behaviors do more to teach conflict resolution than does constant setting of rules and a negative approach. Promptly, classroom staff members positively intervene when conflicts arise, using the conflict as a learning opportunity, to guide the children towards an appropriate resolution.

5. How do you and your staff encourage children to find acceptable ways to problem solve?

Children are positively rewarded for respecting each other. Children are praised frequently for the positive things they do. Negative actions are promptly and consistently addressed in a positive manner. Each child is given the amount of adult attention he or she needs to work through a problem and to learn solutions for the future.

6. How do you and your staff ensure that solutions are carried out?

Staff members work diligently to present a fair and consistent approach to positive discipline. Appropriate solutions are established and carried out in relation to the child's action and without prolonged delay. Open lines of communication are maintained to ensure consistency of approach in regards to the home and the classroom.

7. How do you and your staff set up the environment to foster positive interaction and reduce conflict?

Each classroom is set up as a user friendly positive environment. Items that the children should not handle or need permission to handle are out of their reach. Multiple items of interest to the children are stored in each room in several areas to reduce temptation and promote sharing and turn taking. Classroom staff members strategically position themselves in the room or playground to promote a harmonious environment.

The following practices violate regulatory standards for appropriate discipline and are therefore prohibited:

The use of corporal punishment is prohibited. Corporal punishment means punishment inflicted directly on the body, but not limited to:

- Shaking, slapping, twisting, or squeezing;
- Demanding excessive physical exercise, excessive rest or strenuous or bizzare postures; and
- Compelling a child to eat or have in his/her mouth soap, food, spices, or foreign substances.

The use of room isolation is prohibited. No child can be isolated in an adjacent room, hallway, closet, darkened area, play area or any other area where a child cannot be seen or supervised.

Food cannot be used or withheld as a punishment or a reward.

Toilet training methods that punish, demean or humiliate a child are prohibited.

Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise, is absolutely prohibited. Any child care program must not tolerate, or in any manner condone, an act of abuse or neglect of a child by an employee, volunteer, any person under the provider's control or an individual residing in the home.

Please feel free to adress any questions regarding discipline at the Center to the teacher or an administrative staff member.

BITING

Biting is not unexpected when toddlers are in group care. We are always upset when children are bitten while in our care, and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. While we feel that biting is never the right thing for toddlers to do, we know that they bite for a variety of reasons. Most of those reasons are not related to behavior problems. We do not focus on punishment or expulsion from the program for biting. We do focus on effective techniques that address the specific reason for the biting. When biting occurs we have four main responses:

1. Care for and help the child who was bitten.
2. Help the child who bit learn other behaviors.
3. Work with the child who bit and examine our program to stop the biting.
4. Communicate individually with the parents of the child who bit and the child who was bitten.

Our teachers express strong disapproval of biting. They work to keep children safe and to help the child who bit learn different, more appropriate behavior. When there are episodes of ongoing biting, we develop a plan of specific strategies, techniques, and timelines to address it. We do not and will not use any response that harms a child or is known to be ineffective.

We give immediate attention and, if necessary, first aid to children who are bitten. If a child is bitten and the skin is broken, we recommend that he or she be seen by a health care provider.

When children bite, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day. When children are bitten, their parents are informed personally that day and given a copy of the incident report. Biting is always documented by the teacher on our standard incident report form.

When we experience ongoing biting in a toddler room, we may develop a written plan with specific strategies, techniques, and timelines to work on the problem. This written plan is shared with all parents in the room, if applicable.

We keep the name of the child who bit confidential. This is to avoid labeling and to give the teacher the opportunity to use her time and energy to work on stopping the biting.

Staff members attend training sessions on biting. In addition, we have current resources on biting available for staff and parents. We encourage parents to bring their concerns and frustrations directly to the teachers.

CHILD PROTECTION

All staff members employed by the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center are mandated reporters of child abuse or maltreatment. It is the legal responsibility of a mandated reporter to make a report to the State Central Registry (SCR) if in his or her professional role at the Center he or she has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment or acquires information in any way about a suspected case of child abuse or maltreatment.

Under no circumstance will the Center carry out its own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse or maltreatment. Full cooperation will be given to any and all properly identified representatives from Child Protective Services (CPS), New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) or law enforcement agencies looking into a suspected instance of child abuse or maltreatment involving the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center in any way requested. EMCCC will comply fully with all CPS and OCFS rules and regulations regarding investigations into child abuse or maltreatment. Detailed information regarding rules and regulations of investigations of child abuse or maltreatment is readily available in the office for parents to review upon request.

The details of CPS and/or OCFS investigations will be kept confidential, with information given out to authorized recipients on a “need to know” basis only. EMCCC may be prohibited to contact the parent of a child named in a suspected instance of child abuse or maltreatment. Information will be provided to the parent from EMCCC only if CPS and OCFS give permission to do so.

Parents must inform their child’s teacher of any visible injuries or marks on a child (accidental or other) as soon as the child arrives at the Center. It is in the best interest of the parent to tell the teacher how the injury occurred and what, if any, action had been taken to care for the injury. This will be documented on our standard accident/incident report form and kept in the child’s file.

You will be promptly informed if during your child’s day at the Center he or she is injured or sustains a mark or abrasion on his or her skin (accidental or other), or if a previously unreported mark or injury to the skin is discovered. This will also be documented on our standard incident/accident report form and kept on file.

If you suspect that abuse or maltreatment of your child has occurred (at EMCCC or otherwise) you may report it by calling the hotline (Public Hotline: 800-342-3720).

In the event that any employee or employees of the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center are named as the subject(s) of an investigation of a suspected case of child abuse or maltreatment, the appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety of all children at the Center.

PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center is a community of families, staff members, and Board members working together to create the best possible environment for your child. We welcome families to attend our special functions throughout the year like the Halloween Parade or Fun Day at the end of the summer, to name a few. We encourage participation by the parents and siblings of all Center children. We invite you to visit the Center and your child’s classroom as often as you like and to share your expertise, hobbies, family traditions, and other things that would interest the children. You are welcome to join us on special trips when possible.

EMCCC has a Parent Committee that organizes events and provides volunteer services to the Center. You will be contacted directly by the Parent Committee to volunteer or to participate in any upcoming events. You are encouraged to participate, if possible.

DIAPERS, CLOTHING AND BEDDING

Diapers are to be provided in adequate supply by the parent of any child not yet toilet trained. Wipes are provided by the Center.

All children should be dressed in seasonable, washable, comfortable play clothes allowing them the comfort and freedom to participate in all activities. Once your child is approaching the Preschool level, clothing should include zippers, fasteners, and buttons he or she can learn to self manage. Sturdy shoes or sneakers should also be worn.

The children are brought outside to play as often as possible so it is important that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather and season. During the winter, hats, mittens, boots, and snow clothes are needed for cold weather outside play. If your child wears boots to school, please send along a pair of street shoes to be worn indoors.

A complete set of seasonable clean extra clothing (underwear, socks, shirt, and pants) is needed in the classroom for your child in case of spills, tears, and bathroom accidents. The extra clothes will be kept in your child's cubby. They should be changed every few months to accommodate changing seasons and growth spurts.

Please be prepared to provide clean bedding at least every other week (sheet, blanket, and pillow). All bedding will be sent home on alternate Fridays for cleaning to be returned on the following Monday.

Diapers, clothing and bedding brought to the Center should be labeled with your child's first and last name.

TUITION AND FEES

All tuition rates and fees, and any relevant changes in tuition and fees, are approved annually by the Board of Directors of the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center. Yearly tuition increases may occur in July or January.

The billing of tuition begins on the agreed start date whether or not your child actually starts on that date. Tuition is billed monthly on an invoice that will be left for you in your child's cubby or mailbox. Payment in full is due upon receipt unless other arrangements have been made with the Executive Director.

The parent or parents signing the payment agreement are jointly and individually responsible for paying the tuition. If you have an agreement or court order that another person is obligated to pay all or part of the tuition, you are still responsible to pay EMCCC the full tuition and you must seek that reimbursement from that other person.

Your child is enrolled at the Center on a year round basis. Full tuition payment is required during any absence including sickness, holidays, inclement weather closings, and vacations. The office must be notified at least one month prior to the withdrawal of your child. Otherwise, you are financially responsible for that time.

Payments are accepted in the form of checks, cash, and credit/debit cards (VISA, MasterCard, and Discover). You are liable for all tuition, fees and other sums due to the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center as a result of accepting enrollment and in the event of default payment. You are liable for the additional costs of collection of funds, including an attorney's fees. Receipts are automatically provided for cash and credit/debit card payments, and by request for other payments. Monthly, quarterly and/or year end statements will be provided upon request.

In addition to monthly tuition, a deposit is required at the time of acceptance of enrollment. There are also various fees charged for specific reasons. EMCCC may add to or modify these fees. If any such modification is made, parents will be so advised 30 days before the modified fees go into effect. The following is a summary of those additional costs:

- **Application fee** (This one time fee is collected when the application form is completed. It ensures placement on the wait list. It does not guarantee future enrollment. A camp application fee is collected each year a school aged child attends camp)
- **Deposit** (The deposit is not a fee. A one month non-refundable tuition deposit is required for each child upon acceptance of enrollment. This deposit will be held without interest and will represent tuition payment for the last month of the child's enrollment if appropriate notice is given. The child is not considered officially withdrawn until a month's notice is given to the Executive Director. If a child is enrolled but does not actually attend, the deposit will be forfeited.)
- **Late tuition payment fee** (This fee is charged any time tuition payments are more than 15 days late according to payment agreements. If your account is 4 weeks in arrears, you will be asked to keep your child home until your account is brought up to date. If your account is not settled by the 6th week, your child will be terminated from the program. You can then only re-enroll if your spot has not been filled. If your account should be in arrears by 4 weeks on 3 occasions during the year, your child will be terminated from the program)
- **Returned check fee** (A fee will be charged anytime a check is returned from a bank due to insufficient funds)
- **Late pick up fee** (This fee will be charged per minute late whenever a child is picked up after closing time and can only be waived at the discretion of the Executive Director)
- **Annual activity fee** (A per child activity fee is charged in January. It is prorated for new children starting later in the year. The purpose of the fee is to offset the cost of the enrichment program. The activity fee will be waived if net participation in the annual fundraising raffle in November is equal to or greater than the total of the activity fee)
- **Trip fees** (Separate trip fees for individual special trips will be charged as appropriate)
- **Summer reservation fee** (For families who plan to withdraw their child during the months of July and/or August, notification must be given to the office by mid April. There will be a non-refundable per child per month fee to hold a spot for September)

A **Tuition Payment Agreement and Fees** and **Other Costs Agreement form** is included with the admission packet and will be reviewed and signed during the intake process and annually or when information changes thereafter. All of the elements above regarding tuition, current fee amounts and other costs are covered.

EMCCC accepts Westchester County child care subsidies and scholarships from various entities as tuition payment as long as parents pay their designated monthly shares. Should child care begin prior to the date that application for payment by the social service agency is approved, the parent or guardian is fully responsible for payment of the standard monthly tuition unless an EMCCC scholarship is applied for and granted. Parents must inform an administrative staff member promptly and provide documentation of any changes to subsidies or scholarships. If a subsidy or scholarship terminates temporarily or permanently for any reason, the full amount of the standard monthly tuition for the specific program immediately becomes the responsibility of the parent unless an EMCCC scholarship is applied for and granted.

EMCCC, through the fundraising efforts of the Board of Directors, is able to provide a limited scholarship program to families in need to offset the cost of care. This is done on a case by case basis according to family income levels or unexpected financial hardships and according to the availability of funding. Documentation of household income or financial hardship must be provided to the Executive Director when requesting consideration for a scholarship. If all parents are working, they must first apply to the Department of Social Services for a Westchester County Child Care Subsidy. If rejected, consideration will then be given for an EMCCC scholarship. Although an EMCCC scholarship can continue from year to year while a child is in care, it must be requested and documented annually or sooner depending upon the length of time designated for the scholarship by the Executive Director.

Families with multiple siblings attending receive a 15 % tuition discount for each of the oldest full time children enrolled in EMCCC programs.

The Executive Director will be happy to answer any questions regarding tuition or fees.

HOLIDAYS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

The numerous traditional holidays celebrated in our community are incorporated into the curriculum and activity plans of each classroom in a non sectarian, non religious manner. In addition, we try to include those holidays from the diverse ethnic and national backgrounds represented in the children and families of our Center. Teaching about holidays is done through art, story telling, music, games, and foods typically associated with that holiday.

We encourage you to share with your teacher any special days or holidays that your family celebrates.

Birthdays are recognized and celebrated individually in each group. Some parents choose to do a modest birthday party in the classroom for their child during snack time in the afternoon. This is entirely optional and should be discussed in advance with the teacher. It is requested that the ages of the children in the group and nutritional value of party food items be considered if you decide to bring in brownies or cupcakes or other birthday snacks. Smaller and healthier is always better in this regard. (Mini cupcakes are more appropriate than full size cupcakes.) Foods that may be a choke hazard for our youngest children are always a concern. (Hard candies are dangerous for Toddlers and many Preschoolers and can't be offered.) As the Center is nut free, foods and snacks containing nuts of any kind cannot be offered.

Sometimes parents take the initiative to bring desserts and snacks for holidays and/or to show appreciation for the staff members. This is entirely voluntary. While these special treats are greatly appreciated, it is suggested that you speak with the teacher first because sometimes one class can wind up with multiple desserts in a single day. Also, if you intend for the treats to be given to the staff, you are welcome to put the food in the staff lounge in the second floor, if you prefer.

Our concern always lies with the health and safety of the children so we try to closely monitor the nutritional value of all that they are given to eat. Our goal is to deemphasize food and snacks as a focal point of classroom and Center celebrations. With childhood obesity reaching epidemic proportions in our society, we at EMCCC want to do our part to reverse that alarming trend. The children will learn just as much and have just as much fun even if their holiday treats are smaller and healthier.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

In the event of snow or other extreme weather conditions, we will follow the lead of the local public schools. If the local public schools are closed or delayed due to bad weather conditions, the Child Care Center will have an opening delay. Specific information will be recorded on the phone message at the Child Care Center by 6am on such a morning. A decision will then be made ASAP if the building is to be opened later or closed for the day. That information will then be recorded on the phone message at the Child Care Center. Please be sure to call the center on bad weather mornings and be sure to follow the final directive before bringing your child out. We want to avoid instances of uninformed parents arriving at a closed Center with no staff members present.

If a storm develops after the Center has already been opened and children have been dropped off, a decision will be made whether or not it is safe to stay open. If the decision is made to close early, parents will be individually called and will be given the scheduled early closing time. It is anticipated that parents will arrive by the early closing time to pick up their children. This will help to ensure that everyone gets home safely. There may be instances where the after school program will be closed due to the weather before the children are to be dropped off at the Center from school. Parents will be individually called if that situation arises.

It is understood that delays in openings, early closings, and full day closings can be a hardship for those parents who must report to work despite the weather. Such decisions will not be made lightly and will only be made with the safety of the children and staff as the driving force.

BABY SITTING

The Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center neither supports nor rejects the practice of staff members providing baby sitting services for parents of enrolled children out of hours. Any such arrangement is between the parent and the staff member only and should be arranged for and carried out only when the staff member is not functioning as an EMCCC employee. Before engaging an EMCCC staff member for babysitting, the parent must sign a waiver form that will be provided upon request from the office.

FUNDING

The Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center receives its operating income from several sources including tuition and fees paid by parents, the United Way, Westchester County Child Care Subsidies, Westchester County Child Care Scholarships, the Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program. Tuition and fees do not cover the full cost of operating the Center. An ongoing effort is needed to close the gap between income and expenses through fundraising events and activities sponsored by the Board of Directors, the staff, and the parents, and through grant writing. A copy of the most recent audited EMCCC annual report is available upon request from the Center or from the: New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau
120 Broadway, New York, New York 10271

TERMINATION

EMCCC has the right to request that the child be removed from the Center's care. Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to: failure to pay tuition or provide required documentation; EMCCC determines, in its sole discretion, that the child poses a threat to other children or is overly disruptive to the program; failure of the parent(s) to abide by the rules of the Center; or the Center determines that our program does not meet the needs of the child. If possible, EMCCC will provide advance notice and work with the parents to secure alternate child care.

If you decide to withdraw your child from the program, EMCCC requires four weeks notice. Failure to give adequate notice will result in the forfeiture of the security deposit collected at the time of admission.

CONTACT INFORMATION

ELIZABETH MASCIA CHILD CARE CENTER, INC.

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914-631-2126
914-631-2239 (fax)

Website: www.masciachildcare.org

Information: information@masciachildcare.org

Executive Director: director@masciachildcare.org

President Board of Directors: president@masciachildcare.org

CLOSING REMARKS

We've tried to be as thorough as possible covering all of the items we thought important to be included in this parent handbook. Let us know what you think of it. We'll use your feedback to make the next revision even more useful. Of course there is likely to be something or other that we missed or didn't cover to your complete satisfaction. Or perhaps you were left with a few lingering questions, large or small. Please seek us out and ask whatever you need to ask. Communication and collaboration are keys to our relationship with you and your child and our ability to provide you with a positive and satisfactory experience at the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center. We want you to be comfortable. Providing peace of mind to working parents was a primary purpose when the Day Care Center of the Tarrytowns was founded in 1968 and remains a primary purpose today so many years later. It is always at the core of what we do.