

CONFERENCE
ECE PROGRAM
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SAMPLE

Conference Name
Address
Phone/Fax
Website

Welcome to the (Conference Office)

We are pleased to have you join our educational staff. We strive to create a sense of community amongst ourselves as well as with the families we serve and hope you will soon find yourself comfortable among new friends and colleagues in the Early Childhood Education Center.

Please familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook. It should give you a clear understanding of our guiding philosophy, while detailing policies and procedures, which you will use on a daily basis, as well as policies and procedures related to your term of employment. Feel free to ask lots of questions and, once again, WELCOME!

(Conference Office)

Purpose of Employee Handbook

This handbook provides information on procedures, policies and other personnel matters. It also sets the tone for positive interpersonal relationships, professionalism, and standards of excellence among the ECE staff. These personnel policies are an important element in the relationship between our preschool and individual members of the staff. These policies affect every employee and apply to all employees.

The Conference recognizes the value of every individual as an employee and wishes to retain people who are knowledgeable and willing to work. It is even more important, however, that staff members are genuinely concerned with the welfare of the children enrolled at the ECE Program, with their parents, and with the reputation of the preschool as a quality institution. All employees should earn a fair salary, have a good working environment, and enjoy security in their position, enabling them to enjoy their work and contribute to the continuing success of the ECE Program.

All staff members report to the Director. Personnel policies are established and amended by the Conference ECE Board.

Although adherence to these personnel policies is considered a condition of employment, nothing in the Handbook is intended to imply a contract or convey any contractual rights, and it may be modified or revised by Personnel Committee at any time. Policies will be reviewed periodically and changes or amendments will be presented to each staff member. When changes are made, employees will be notified in writing. Advise a Director if you believe a policy has become outdated or is adversely affecting employee performance. Suggestions for inclusion in revised Handbooks are welcome.

These personnel policies shall apply in addition to any applicable laws and regulations. The ECE Program also uses the Policy Manual, job descriptions, Parent Handbook, and other appropriate written materials to communicate work expectations and employee responsibilities.

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Section 1 – Mission and Philosophy

Mission Statement

Philosophy

Vision

Curriculum

The curriculum used in the Early Childhood Programs has been approved by the North American Division and the Pacific Union Conference. It upholds the standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is aligned with the NAEYC standards of development. Refer to the list of approved curriculum:

<http://paucearlychildhood.adventistfaith.org/resources-and-curriculum-recommendations>.

SAMPLE

Section 2 – The Hiring Process

Employment Classifications

Non-Exempt (Hourly) Employees

Exempt (Salaried) Employees

Reassignment between Classifications

Hire Date

Initial Employment Period

Job Description

The responsibilities of each position in the child care program are outlined and described in the appropriate job description. Employees are expected to familiarize themselves with their job description which includes performance guidelines. (Samples: <http://paucearlychildhood.adventistfaith.org/job-descriptions>.)

Orientation and Training

Formal orientation and training sessions are provided and coordinated for each new employee after the hire date. Program topics range from legal requirements and activities governing child care workers to instructional strategies to help children grow mentally, spiritually, physically, socially, and emotionally.

Employees are expected to participate in ongoing staff development through programs offered by the employer and/or other approved training. Obtaining continuing credit as required by law is the responsibility of the employee.

Personnel Records

In accordance with government requirements and licensing guidelines, personnel records are maintained for each employee. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, and persons to be notified in case of an emergency.

Upon request employees may review the contents of their personnel records. All original documents are the property of the center and remain in the personnel record.

Background Record Check

New Hires

Selection Policy

Conditions of Employment

Verification of Employability

Application

SAMPLE

Section 3 – Professionalism

Appearance

Physical comfort is a key factor in working with children. Accordingly, employees are encouraged to wear clothing that is comfortable, washable, and allows for working with children in sitting, kneeling, and standing positions. (Insert your dress code). For example: tattered or tight jeans, tops or blouses revealing the midriff and/or bust areas, or shirts with inappropriate slogans or designs are not appropriate attire. Wearing low-heel shoes or tennis shoes may be more comfortable.

The immediate supervisor is primarily responsible to ensure policy compliance and to determine the appropriateness of an employee's work appearance. Employees arriving for work inappropriately attired will be asked to correct any inconsistencies; correction may include returning home to change into more appropriate clothing.

Employees will be expected to make up the time required to leave the building to make such a change or to take paid time off.

Attitude

A star employee inspires and motivates others, and approaches teamwork with a positive attitude. This staff member truly believes "attitude is everything" and does "whatever it takes" to make a difference.

Language

Children imitate behavior displayed by adults in the center. It is important that each employee demonstrates courteous behavior in language, tone of voice, actions, and body language. Courtesy includes comments of appreciation, words of apology, and words of request. Behavior lacking courtesy on the part of an employee may result in a formal conference with the director.

Phone Usage

The telephone is intended only for business related to the child care program. Routine calls from friends and family are not permitted. Only emergency calls will be routed to an employee. No "collect" long distance calls will be accepted, unless approved by the director. Cell phone use in the classroom is strictly prohibited.

Visitors

The staff and resources of the center are intended to be used exclusively for the care of children enrolled in the child care program. Employees are discouraged from having visitors at the center on a daily or frequent basis. Such visits may result in the supervision of the children being interrupted, thereby creating the likelihood of accidents and other tragedies.

Social Media

The Conference understand that some employees participate in social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn); participate in chat rooms; create and maintain personal websites, including "blogs";

and/or engage in other forms of personal internet use. The Conference respects employees' online social networking and personal internet use. However, employees' online comments, online postings of photos or other images, and/or other online activities could negatively impact the Conference. The Conference requires that employees observe the following guidelines when participating in social networking sites or engaging in other forms of internet use, regardless of whether employees are on or off duty:

(Insert conference policy)

SAMPLE

Section 4 – Compensation Practices

Payroll Advance

Attendance

Absenteeism

Bonuses

Pay Scales

Payroll Deductions

Mandatory –

Voluntary –

Tardiness

Overtime

Pay for Staff Development

Pay Periods and Hours

Pay Check Distribution

Recording Time

Vacation and Holidays

Personal/Sick Days

Breaks

Cost of Living Increases

Pay Raises

Make-up Time

Pay Days

Earning Continuation in Case of Death

SAMPLE

Section 5 – Benefits and Leave

Jury Duty

Military Leave of Absence

Disability Leave of Absence

Sick Leave

Family Medical Leave Act

Medical Leave

Scheduling of Medical Appointments

Vacation/Holidays

Funeral Leave

Leave of Absence

Continuing Education Assistance

Insurance

Retirement

Workers' Compensation

Section 6 – Health and Safety

Employee Fitness

The health of the children, fellow employees, as well as the director's personal health is of utmost importance in the operation of the center. "No employee who has any communicable disease shall perform his/her duties in any location where such would endanger the health or welfare of the children or staff. The director, in writing, may require an employee to submit to a medical examination by a physician whenever there is reason to believe that the employee has a communicable disease."

See your state guidelines for recommended disease/illness exclusion and periods of time before returning to the child development center.

Emergency Preparedness

To ensure an orderly response in the event of an emergency (e.g., fire, earthquake or other natural disaster, or intruder), employees and children are required to participate in safety training programs and drills as required by state and federal licensing standards.

At no time during a drill or emergency situation are employees to leave children unattended. Adult supervision is always required.

Documentation of participation in training programs and drills are maintained in the center's log and personnel files as needed.

Employee Health Screening

All employees, prior to entering service and periodically thereafter, as required by policy, shall present a completed medical examination form signed by a licensed physician showing an ability to perform the essential functions of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation. Employees may be requested to submit a job-related medical examination during their employment by a licensed physician. Individuals who refuse to submit a job-related medical examination which is justified by business necessity may be ineligible for further employment. The results of a job-related medical examination will be considered by the employing organization in compliance with applicable laws. Employees shall immediately inform the director upon discovery of a contagious or communicable disease.

First Aid/CPR

All employees are expected to complete first aid and CPR training within the first year of employment. Renewal for certification is the responsibility of the employee. Current and up-to-date certificates are maintained in the personnel file.

Substance Abuse

An employee using alcohol, tobacco, controlled substance without a prescription and/or other misuse of drugs will be subject to immediate termination.

Section 7 – Issues of Concern

Nondiscrimination Policy

Harassment

Grievance

The Conference ECE programs are committed to maintaining a Christian environment where the employees can work in an atmosphere of acceptance, civility, and mutual respect for the rights, duties and sensibilities of each individual. It is extremely important for employees to communicate with each other in a respectful manner. When one employee has a problem with another employee, she/he will be expected to meet each other and resolve their differences. When a disagreement between employees is not resolved, it will affect the atmosphere of the center. Children are perceptive and sensitive to the tone of voice, body language, and any change in personality. It is our goal to provide a safe, happy, and nurturing environment for all who come through the doors of our ECE programs.

However, whenever people work together, misunderstandings may occur because of differences in personality and viewpoint, communication problems, and work pressures. The Conference encourages all misunderstandings to be handled at the classroom level wherever possible. But if the employee is hesitant to discuss her/his concerns with the Head Teacher, the next person would be the ECE Director or Assistant Director.

Following are the steps for solving grievances:

Step 1: The grievance should be put in writing and given to the ECE Director in person or by e-mail. The employee should also request a meeting where the employee and ECE Director will discuss the grievance and hopefully come to a mutual consensus. If the employee does not feel the situation is settled, proceed to Step 2. The written form of the grievance should be signed by both the employee and the ECE Director.

Step 2: If the employee does not feel satisfied with the meeting with the ECE Director, the employee may then contact the Conference Office of Education Designee and request a meeting.

Step 3: If the matter is not resolved at this level, the employee may contact in writing the Program's Board Chairperson and request an audience with the Personnel Committee, which will forward its recommendation to the Education Board of the Conference. The Education Board's evaluation and resolution of the problem will be considered final and binding.

Steps of Appeal

Section 8 – General Standards of Performance

Professional Growth

Continual professional growth is an expectation for early childhood employees. Refer to the Pacific Union Conference Professional Achievement Recognition Manual for details and guidelines.

Attendance at Program Functions

All ECE employees are required to attend all Program functions, e.g. open house, singing performances, etc. Excused absence must be approved by the director.

Professional Achievement Recognition

The purpose of Professional Achievement Recognition is to certify and acknowledge the efforts and attainments of the early childhood professional who is continually learning and growing within their area of expertise. The intent of the Professional Achievement Recognition process is to honor such professionalism.

Professional Achievement Recognition is the process whereby the academic and experiential professionalism of an individual is officially recognized by the Pacific Union Conference Office of Education (PUCOE) Early Childhood Education (ECE Division). The multi-leveled certificate indicates the individual has completed the qualifying expectations for professional recognition.

Refer to the Early Childhood website <https://paucearlychildhood.adventistfaith.org/certification> for complete information and the links to the Professional Achievement Recognition Manual, application and matrix.

Employee Evaluations

Evaluations are a systematic method of evaluating your performance and behavior in relation to your job responsibilities and facility policies. The evaluation is completed by the person to whom you are directly responsible or by your department director. An evaluation may be made prior to your completion of the introductory period, and at any other time deemed advisable by this facility.

In addition, supervisors may offer suggestions or make recommendations regarding your performance in the course of personal conversation or in writing. The purpose of this counseling is to give assistance and constructive suggestions which, if followed, should enable you to perform your duties and conduct yourself in compliance with facility standards and policies.

[Add your specific evaluation processes here]

Promotions

Disciplinary/Termination Procedure

The purpose of the disciplinary policy is to provide a means of addressing unacceptable practices or performances and to assist the employee in correcting the problem and achieving success in the job. If disciplinary measures are to be imposed, it is essential that the ECE Director or designee involved first investigate the facts, maintain confidentiality, use corrective rather than punitive action and respect the dignity of the employee. In consultation with the Conference Office of Education Designee, the following steps are available to the ECE Director, whenever unacceptable practices or performances occur:

1. **Verbal Warning.** The ECE Director will speak to the employee regarding a problem and explain the corrective action given. A written record of the date, those present and the content of the discussion should be kept by the ECE Director.
2. **Written Warning.** If problems continue, a formal written warning stating the extent of the problem, suggested course(s) of action, and the time period for resolution should be prepared by the ECE Director. Prior to giving the document to the employee, it must be reviewed by the Conference Office of Education Designee. The written warning should also advise the employee of the consequences, if the problem continues. The written warning should allow space for the employee's comments, the date and the employee's signature. The employee should be advised that his/her signature indicates that the information was discussed and a copy given to them and not necessarily that he/she agrees with the contents of the document. If the employee refuses to sign the document, another supervisor or administrator should sign as a witness that the employee refused to sign but was provided a copy of the document. The original document must be sent to the Human Resources Department to be placed in the employee's official personnel file and a copy should be provided to the employee.
3. **Follow-up Review.** At the end of the noted time period during which correction or improvement was expected, the Conference Office of Education Designee must be informed if the desired improvement has not been met. Another meeting between the ECE Director and the employee should be held, wherein the ECE Director discusses the results or improvement since the initial written warning. A written confirmation of the discussion, agreement, and future expectations should be provided to the employee, with a copy sent to the Human Resource Department to be placed in the employee's official personnel file.

4. **Additional Discipline.** If the desired improvement has not been reached during the time stated on the written warning or follow up, the ECE Director or designee will inform the Office of Education of the status of the employee's progress or lack thereof. Upon review of the matter, the Office of Education may choose an appropriate level of discipline, based on the severity of the offense, including but not limited to, administrative leave(s) with or without pay, suspension, probation, or termination. A meeting with the employee will be held in which the employee is advised of the Office of Education recommended and imposed action. A letter will be sent to the employee by the ECE Director confirming the discussion of the meeting and stating the disciplinary status, if any. A copy shall be maintained in the employee's official personnel file.
5. **Release.** If disciplinary or corrective measures have failed to remedy the situation and if termination seems to be appropriate, the matter shall be forwarded to the Conference Office of Education Designee. Employees terminated will receive the full pay earned at the time of discharge. Gross violation of conduct may result in immediate termination.

The procedures outlined above are for guideline purposes only and may be changed or omitted by the employer without notice. Nothing contained herein is intended to nor should it be construed to limit or alter the at-will employment status of each employee.

Handbook Acknowledgement

Please read and sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgment of the Handbook.

I have received a written copy of the Handbook.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read, understand and comply with all Conference and facility policies, rules and procedures, including, but not limited to, those set out in the Handbook.

I further acknowledge that the Conference and facility policies, rules and procedures, including, but not limited to, those set out in the written version of the Handbook, are subject to change, modification and amendment by the president of the Conference or his designated representative from time to time without advance notice.

I acknowledge that this Handbook is not an employment contract between the Conference or the facility and me for any specific time period. The employment relationship between the Conference or the facility and employees is based on mutual consent and can be terminated at any time, either by myself, the Conference or the facility, without notice or requirement of cause.

This Handbook is not intended to restrict rights protected under federal or state law or local ordinances. This handbook will not be construed or applied in any manner that violates or interferes with employees' rights under the law. I understand that if at any time I have questions regarding a policy, rule or subject outlined in this Handbook, I should ask my supervisor or Director for an explanation or assistance.

I understand I must comply with the equal opportunity and harassment policies outlined in the Handbook and cooperate with their enforcement.

I understand I must comply with the Electronic Systems Policy outlined in the Handbook. I acknowledge that I have no expectation of privacy with regard to data or communications transmitted to/from, stored on, or otherwise contained in Conference or facility electronic systems. I consent to the Conference logging into, intercepting and reading the entire content of any electronic communication, message or data transmitted to/from, stored on or otherwise contained in Conference or facility electronic systems to the full extent permitted by applicable federal and state laws.

Name of Employee (print)

Signature of Employee

Date