

FAMILY HANDBOOK

1024 Thomas St. South Bend, IN 46601 -- 574-232-0220 -- elcampito.org

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Dear Parents:

Thank you for choosing El Campito Child Development Center as your choice for child care for your precious child!

Our commitment to you is to provide your child with the best loving care and early childhood education within a safe, developmentally appropriate environment. We hire and train educated, experienced teachers and assistants to do this. We welcome your comments any time and have an open-door policy for you to visit during our operational hours.

To help us during the enrollment process, please remember to bring the following items:

- **Seasonal Clothes marked with your child's initials** (pants, shirt, underwear, extra sets if potty training) to keep in your child's cubby in the classroom.
- **Unopened** packs of diapers or pull-ups, if applicable

- Health records with current immunizations, signed by a physician, within 30 days of your child's start date.

We must have these items to complete your child's enrollment. Thank you for your cooperation!

Please ensure you read and understand El Campito's discipline policy as written in the Parent Handbook. We also ask that if your child has a behavior issue while in our care, you not punish the child at home for it. We encourage you to try the same redirection and conflict resolution techniques at home that we use here. Please trust us to handle these classroom situations and notify you of anything unusual. You may ask for a conference with the teacher(s) and the director(s) to discuss any questions or concerns.

Introduction

El Campito was founded in 1970 to aid migrant families coping with the struggles of starting a new life in South Bend. Ignacio and Concepcion Nino offered childcare services for working families in their homes and neighborhood. More than 50 years later, through the generous support of the community, El Campito has grown out of the Nino's home to become one of South Bend's oldest independent, non-profit child development centers. El Campito is now a licensed Level 4 Paths to Quality bilingual child development center. We are one of only six child development centers in South Bend accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) *and* the only one in South Bend providing bilingual (Spanish-English) instruction. The HighScope method is used in our classrooms.

Educational Philosophy

El Campito Child Development Center, Inc. has adopted the HighScope educational approach to learning. HighScope is a national early childhood training, research, and curriculum development leader. It is based on the Piagetian principles that children develop at their rate and learn best by experience. The program encourages active exploration and free choice in a richly equipped learning center environment. It also provides a balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities.

Classroom adults are trained and implement the daily routine focusing on 58 Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs). Teaching teams develop Lesson plans daily by focusing on individual and group needs. Please refer to the HighScope Principles in your Parent Packet for more information.

Through our programs - our learning center and after school - we demonstrate our commitment to creating a community of our own - an inclusive environment that embraces and celebrates children from all cultures and backgrounds.

Teaching Staff

We believe teachers must be knowledgeable and trained in early childhood practices to have a developmentally appropriate classroom. Each classroom is staffed with lead teachers with a minimum of a CDA (Child Development Associate) certificate, Associate or Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or related field. All staff must attend in-service training, including CPR, Pediatric First Aid, and Universal Precautions.

Admission Policies

El Campito, Inc.'s Learning Center is a state-licensed child care center for children ages 1-12 years and complies with state regulations.

There shall be no discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or handicap.

Waiting List and Scholarships

Families will be placed on a first-come, first-served basis for subsidized childcare openings for six months. Re-application is necessary after this. First consideration will be given as follows:

- Siblings of a child already enrolled shall be admitted when and if there is an opening.
- Transfers of funding sources will be given priority to children already enrolled depending on income eligibility and funding availability.

Orientation: The first few weeks

The first few weeks in any new environment can produce anxiety for your child. El Campito's Director of Programs and Operations and teachers are sensitive to these feelings. Our staff is trained to be alert and aware of your child's reaction to this new environment and will make every effort to help your child adjust as easily as possible. As a parent, you can do these things to help ease the adjustment period:

- Take Time to get to know the teachers involved in caring for your child. Since your feelings may be indirectly communicated to your child, it is important that you feel confident in the staff's abilities and comfortable about bringing your child to El Campito.
- If possible, plan to spend an hour or two visiting the classroom with your child before the first day of attendance.
- Talk positively about El Campito with your child and what they will do there.
- If you anticipate a problem in separation, discuss this with the teachers and decide on a procedure to follow in advance. After signing in in the foyer, we suggest you go to the classroom, exchange greetings, say to your child, **"Goodbye, I will pick you up later. I know you will have a good day,"** and then leave the building. This method may seem abrupt, but it will minimize separation anxiety for your child. This is preferred to "sneaking out" because your child is well-informed and can say goodbye to you.
- For children over 12 months, bringing a special object from home, such as a stuffed toy or blanket, may be helpful. This may help the child bridge the gap from the familiar to an unfamiliar environment.

You may feel apprehensive after leaving your child during the first few weeks. This is a natural response; we know your child's well-being is important to you. We encourage you to call El Campito during the day to determine how your child is doing. El Campito's Director of Programs and Operations, staff, and teachers are eager to keep you informed. A readjustment may occur after a long weekend or vacation. Your continuing positive attitude will facilitate any such transitions.

Orientation: Mid-Year

If you are enrolling your child mid-year, you must have a one-on-one orientation with your child's teachers before they can start. See above for content and advisories regarding orientation.

If your child is upset

If your child has an upsetting experience, such as a change in family structure, the death of a pet, or an illness in the family, please, let us know. We want to help your child overcome difficulties through play, art, or sympathetic conversation. Your child's total development is important to us all.

What to Bring

- 1 Set of seasonal clothes to leave at the center (shirt, pants, socks, and underwear)
- Unopened diapers and wipes*
- Unopened pull-ups or training pants

*This applies to preschool classes only

Please **mark** all items with your child's name.

We will not be responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items. All items left after a child leaves the program will belong to El Campito, Inc. Please **do not** have your child bring items from home, such as toys, books, etc., unless the teacher has permitted a class project. Occasionally, each classroom will request special items brought to the center. Please check with your teacher.

Emergency Closings and Procedures

Disaster Plan:

In an emergency or disaster, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. Please do not telephone the center. The telephone will be used for outgoing emergency calls only.
2. Children will remain with center staff members on the premises or at the designated emergency evacuation site for 72 hours unless an injury requires release to an emergency medical facility.
3. Signs will be posted at the center, giving the destination of evacuated children.
4. Appropriate news media will be informed of the evacuation so information can be broadcast and printed.

5. There will be a specific area for claiming and signing out children at the evacuation site. Only adults previously authorized on the emergency form can sign out children.

Notification of illnesses, serious injury, or death of staff members:

In the event there is a serious illness, injury, or death of any staff members, the following procedures will be implemented:

- If a need arises where the center will be closed, parent(s) or authorized pick up person will be notified for children to be picked up.

- Notice will be posted for further information regarding substitutes and closing dates.

If we are closed due to inclement weather conditions, we will notify you through the local media.

If we are closed for emergencies while the children are still in our care, we will immediately inform the parent(s)/guardian or someone on the emergency pick-up list.

Attendance Policy

If your child is not attending the program, you must inform the center before 8:20 am for the learning center to be considered an excused absence. Reasons for excused absences may include:

1. Illness of the child or parent
2. Medical reasons
3. Family emergency

4. Vacation of a parent from work or school
(with two weeks' written notice)

5. Non-contracted day (for example, a regular day off, no work, non-school day, religious holiday, non-enrollment day, etc.)

6. Suspension from another school program (children cannot attend their day at El Campito if they have been suspended from school).

If the center is not notified, it will be considered an unexcused absence. Three unexcused absences may result in termination of services.

Arrival and Departure

Upon arrival, each child must be **signed in** by a parent or authorized person **before** entering the classroom. An adult must accompany the child and let the teacher be aware of the child's presence upon arrival. This is also a good time to connect with your child's teacher and tell them how your child's night/morning/weekend went. Children **must be here by 8:30 am.**

At departure time, each child must be **signed out** by a parent or authorized person before entering the classroom. A child will only be released to the authorized person (**who is 18 years or older**) designated on the child's emergency form. Identification will be required. **The parent is responsible for notifying center personnel of any changes on the emergency form.** We must also have a court order in our files preventing a particular individual from contact with a child. **No child will be released to anyone who appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.** If an intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing the child from the premises, the center will immediately report the incident to the local police agency. It is the parent's responsibility regarding the safety and responsibility of your child when you enter and exit the building. Please make sure children are properly supervised, especially in the parking lot.

There will be a late fee of \$10.00 after 5:30 pm for late pick up each day. An additional \$10.00 is added to the initial late fee every 10 minutes until the child is picked up. Your child cannot return to school until the late fee has been paid. Please refer to the **Tuition Policy** for more information. If you are late for an emergency, contact the office before your pick-up time. Three late pick-ups during the enrollment year may result in termination from the program. We reserve the right to call Child Protective Services if a child is not picked up within a reasonable time without any notice (past one hour after closing).

Daily Schedule and Activities

The daily schedule is posted in each classroom. During the day, the children are involved in a variety of activities that foster the child's development, emphasizing physical, emotional, cognitive, and creative development.

Children will go outside daily according to licensing regulations unless the temperature falls below 25 degrees (including wind chill factor) or during inclement weather. Please dress children in warm, waterproof outer clothing, including waterproof mittens or gloves, during colder weather. During

warmer weather, children need to wear appropriate clothing, including shoes. Please do not send children wearing slippers without back straps for safety reasons. Gym shoes are preferred. Children may sometimes engage in messy play as part of our developmental plan. Therefore, please send your child in clothes that would be appropriate for play. We must also have an extra change of clothes marked with their name to leave at the center.

Parents may send a note to keep a child in for up to three days without a doctor's note for a particular season, depending on the availability of supervision for the child (Child-Staff Ratio). A note from the doctor is required beyond three days to document medical reasons to keep a child indoors. However, if your child is well enough to be in attendance, your child is well enough to play outside.

Field trips are vital to our program since children learn through actual experiences. Parents are notified in advance before all field trips. Parent permission and volunteer sign-up sheets will be posted for your information.

Inclusion Policy for Children with Special Needs

El Campito, Inc. accepts children with special needs and will make adaptations to ensure full inclusion of special needs children in everyday routines and activities. Guidance about recommended adaptations and any procedures necessary to ensure the children's health, safety, and inclusion will be solicited from the child's family and medical or educational services currently assisting the child and their family. A parent must sign a release of information before consultation with any services or individuals other than family. Within one week of enrollment, the child's family will complete a special care plan and emergency information plan.

All staff members who have contact with a child with special needs will receive training to facilitate inclusion.

As appropriate, referrals to school and or community programs that may provide additional assistance will be made.

Discipline

We encourage the use of positive discipline rather than punishment. Teachers will communicate to children using positive statements and encourage them, with adult support, to use their own words and solutions to resolve their interpersonal conflicts. We value teaching the children how to solve problems independently and be accountable for their actions.

Inappropriate disciplines, such as physical punishment, humiliation, and abusive language, will not be used. Staff will not associate disciplinary action or rewards with rest, food, or toileting.

If the behavior of a child is disrupting the positive learning environment, written documentation will be sent to the parent/ guardian. A parent-teacher-director conference may be held to discuss the reported behaviors. We will work with the parents to create a positive discipline plan that will work for their child. Referrals and resources outside our building will be arranged for parents/children if needed.

If the child's behavior threatens the safety or well-being of other children, themselves, or staff, the parent will be notified and expected to pick up the child within one hour. Extreme or violent behavior

may result in immediate removal from the program for an unspecified amount of time, to be determined individually. A parent-child-staff meeting may be held before the child returns to the program. The parent/child's failure to comply with the above policies may result in termination from the program.

Termination from the program will be considered in extreme situations after all reasonable resources have been exhausted.

Snacks and Meals

El Campito, Inc. follows the USDA guidelines for nutrition. Our menus are designed to provide children with balanced, healthy meals and snacks. We serve breakfast, lunch, and two snacks daily.

If your child requires a special diet for medical reasons or allergic reactions, please provide a physician's note regarding the restriction and substitution. A child requiring a special diet due to religious or personal beliefs may be accommodated with a written statement from a parent. The center may request the parent to supplement the food served by the center.

Any food brought into the center must be prepared in a state-licensed kitchen (grocery store), unopened, and in the original container for special events.

Birthday celebrations are welcome in our center. We encourage parents to choose healthy snacks for such celebrations. Please, let the teacher know if you wish to provide a special treat for the class. Here is a list of options or examples of healthy snacks:

- 100% juice instead of punch
- low- fat cheese cubes or hummus with whole grain crackers
- Low-fat yogurt, fruit, and granola. They could be served in a waffle cone.
- Trail mix (whole-grain, low-sugar cereals mixed with dried fruit, pretzels, etc.
- Whole bananas, tangerine oranges/cuties, or apples with/without caramel dip.

Health and Safety

Illness:

For the protection of everyone at the center, your child must be kept home if they have shown any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours:

- Temperature over 101 (must be fever-free without a fever reducer for 24 hours)
- Heavy nasal discharge that is not clear
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Open Sores
- Head Lice (must be completely nit-free before returning)

If your child has been exposed to any contagious disease, please keep them home and notify El Campito, Inc. immediately. Examples of contagious diseases are Strep Throat, Pinworms, Ringworm, Viral Infections, Infected ears, Measles, Mumps, Chicken Pox, Scarlet Fever, Lice, etc.

The center may not readmit children who exhibit symptoms of the illness for which they were excluded without the director's approval. A doctor's note stating that your child is no longer contagious may also be necessary before returning to the center.

If your child becomes ill (as described with symptoms above or does not participate as usual in their daily routine) during the day, the parent/guardian will be notified. The parent must pick up the child within the hour. If the parent/guardian is unavailable, the persons listed on the authorized pick-up form will be contacted.

If your child is involved in a medical emergency, El Campito, Inc. will contact the parent/ guardian, the child's doctor, if necessary, and emergency medical service (911). If we cannot contact a parent/ guardian, El Campito, Inc. will take your child to Memorial Hospital.

Medication

El Campito, Inc. will only administer medications prescribed by a physician. Your child's name, the physician's name, the name of the medication, and the dosage must be printed on the bottle. The parent must fill out and sign a medication slip stating the dates and times the medication should be given.

El Campito, Inc. staff cannot accept over-the-counter medication (such as Tylenol, Benadryl, cough drops, etc.) without a doctor's prescription.

The center may use the parent's permission to use preventive products, such as sunscreens, insect repellents, non-medicated powder, petroleum jelly, and A&D ointment.

Medical Records

A physician or a nurse practitioner must complete your child's health record within 30 days of the child's enrollment and update annually with age-appropriate immunization, including

1. Conjugated Pneumococcal Vaccine
2. Varicella Vaccine or demonstrated immunity to Varicella

The exception to this requirement might be made for the following reasons:

1. If the parent objects to immunizations for religious reasons and provides documentation of the parent's objection.
2. If the physician documents a medical reason that the child should not be immunized.
3. If the physician provides documentation that the child receives complete age-appropriate immunizations.

Children two years and younger must have annual health examinations.

Smoke, Drug, Weapons Policy

El Campito, Inc. prohibits tobacco use, unintended use of toxic substances, use or possession of alcohol or illegal substances, use of weapons in the facility, and any center-related activity.

Children will not be released to an intoxicated or impaired person. If an intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing the child from the care of this facility, we will report the incident to the local police.

(Please refer to Adult Rules of Conduct for further information)

Child Abuse and Neglect

El Campito, Inc. staff are legally required to report suspected child abuse and neglect cases. The center shall always maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained regarding suspected abuse or neglect.

Photographs and Publicity

Occasionally, photographs or videos of children and their families may be taken throughout the year for publicity, classroom activities, and funding presentations. These photographs or videos may appear in the classroom, in local newspapers, in magazines, and on television. Please sign the optional agreement when registering if you do not want your child photographed or videotaped.

Parent Involvement in the learning process

Parents are always welcome at El Campito Child Development Center. We believe parents are the most significant adults in a child's life. We do everything possible to ensure parents' involvement in our programs. Please remember if you bring siblings or other children, they must always remain in your care. Also, if your child is part-time and comes for an event on their unscheduled day, they must remain in your care unless you have notified the Director of Programs and Operations.

Developing methods for keeping communication flowing is an important part of each staff member's responsibility. Your input is important to us. The steps for addressing an issue are as follows:

1. Discuss any concerns you may have with El Campito's Director of Programs and Operations or other admin staff at any time. Other staff members responsible for El Campito's children can speak with you. Please consult with El Campito's Director of Programs and Operations or your child's teacher should any problems arise concerning your child, whether at home or at El Campito. We seek your involvement in El Campito's Program, particularly in following your child's progress.
2. If the issue needs more attention after speaking with a staff member, we would happily schedule a conference with the teacher(s) and the director(s) to discuss it further.

Annual Home Visit

As written in our "Parent Registration Agreement," and in the spirit of building partnerships with families and setting mutual goals for your child's learning experience, a teacher and an admin staff person will conduct a home visit sometime within the first quarter of the school year.

Parent Visits to El Campito

Parents are always welcome. We encourage you to visit our center unannounced at any time. Stop in, visit your child, and join in our activities. El Campito has an open-door policy and invites all parents and authorized persons listed on the child's registration form to visit El Campito at any time. This will show

your child that we have a partnership for their benefit. However, there may be specific times or age groups for this to be handled with care. For example, two-year-olds do not have a sense of time other than concrete “signs.” When they see a parent at El Campito, they may believe it is time to go home. You may want to schedule your visit to coincide with a convenient time to take a child of this age with you as you leave El Campito. You may also wish to discuss visits with your child’s teacher so they can plan and prepare. The education and care of their children is one of the foundations of a child’s development. Research shows parents actively involved in the care and education of their children have a direct, positive impact on their child’s educational success. Parents who attend sessions and learn about various aspects of their child’s development have a greater positive influence on their child’s development than those who do not.

El Campito offers a variety of ways in which parents become involved and participate in the activities at El Campito. Again, our goal is to form a partnership with families for the well-being of the children.

These are how parents become involved:

- Communication with the staff, including daily conversations when they bring the child or pick them up, formal and informal conferences, checking the child’s classroom folder and reading the notes, newsletters, flyers provided, etc.
- Volunteering in the classroom. Please speak to an admin staff person about ways you may occasionally be involved in the classroom or regularly. There are training requirements for this type of participation.
- Join your child’s class for breakfast, lunch, snack time, storytime, or a field trip.
- Attending parent-training activities. El Campito will offer parent meetings for educational purposes that address issues relating to child development. Taking advantage of these meetings can be very beneficial to both you and your child.
- Attending the center’s monthly family activities.

We encourage you to participate in your child’s learning and development at El Campito. Your child is exposed to lots of new learning activities at our center. Talk to your child about what fun things they did at El Campito and find ways to extend these activities at home. Perhaps your child enjoys a certain book in the classroom, which you could get from the library and read out loud. If your child enjoys art, provide an art corner at home. Many children love animals, so a zoo or farm trip is a great activity. Or maybe your child enjoys building fantastic creations with blocks, so visiting a local construction site would be fun and rewarding.

Communication with Parents

El Campito wants to establish ongoing two-way communication with the parents to ensure their child’s learning and developmental needs are met and to build trust and mutual understanding.

We will make efforts to do this through verbal and written communication, such as but not limited to daily reports, newsletters, incident reports, communicable diseases notices, and conferences.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are the formal vehicle for information exchange from the developmental documentation and anecdotal notes the teachers compile to be communicated to the families. These conferences will be designed to discuss all areas of development: cognitive, language, social-emotional, and physical. El Campito offers conferences twice yearly in fall and spring; a parent or teacher may request more at any time. Problems and areas of concern may be addressed to find joint solutions between the parent and teacher. Teachers will post notices for parents to sign up for a convenient conference time.

Each classroom at El Campito has an email address that the teachers check during naptime hours, 12-2 PM

1's year old class:	toddlers1.elcampito@gmail.com
2's year old class:	toddlers2.elcampito@gmail.com
3's & 4's year old class:	preschool34.ec@gmail.com
4's & 5's year old class:	Preschool45.ec@gmail.com
Afterschool class:	afterschool.elcampito@gmail.com

El Campito has three means of communicating important events, information, and closings regarding our program and services:

Remind Text Messages: Please, see an admin staff person to sign up for Remind texts. We use this messaging system to send information on closings, field trips, events, and other important information regarding El Campito.

Facebook: Follow El Campito on Facebook at [facebook.com/elcampitosouthbend](https://www.facebook.com/elcampitosouthbend). If you do not have Facebook, please ask a family member or close friend to follow us on Facebook for up-to-date information.

WNDU: El Campito posts closings on WNDU.

If South Bend Community School Corporation **CLOSES** for weather-related emergencies, El Campito CLOSES. El Campito **will not** be following their 2-hour delay policy.

Parent Concern Procedure

El Campito, Inc. makes every effort to provide a rewarding experience for everyone. If you are concerned about this program or with the staff of El Campito, Inc., the following procedure should be followed:

1. If you have a problem, question, or concern, you should first discuss it with the teacher.

2. If the teacher cannot resolve the problem to your satisfaction or you are uncomfortable approaching the person, you should take the concern to the Director of Programs and Operations.

3. The Director of Programs and Operations will listen to your concerns, gather information from the appropriate individuals, review company policy, and respond to your concerns.

You will be allowed to discuss your concern as long as the discussion remains fair and reasonable. Verbal abuse or physical threats by a parent/guardian or customer to any staff member will be considered unreasonable treatment of the program staff. Any display of such behavior will result in immediate dismissal from El Campito, Inc. programs.

You may contact the Director of Program and Operations at (574) 232-0220 ext. 4 or write to:

Director of Program and Operations

El Campito, Inc.

1024 West Thomas Street

South Bend, Indiana 46601

Resource and Referral Information

You have the right to obtain information regarding this facility's license status, any complaints filed with the division concerning the license and or violations of the licensing status by calling (317) 232-4469 OR 1-877-511-1144 or logging on to childcarefinder.in.gov

If you need child care referral information, the local resource and referral number for St. Joseph County is (574) 289-7815.

Withdrawal/Termination of Services:

If you withdraw your child, you must give written notice two weeks prior. Fees will be charged for the remaining two weeks whether a child attends. The parent is responsible for collecting any supplies (diapers and clothes) left in the program. Any supplies left after the termination will belong to El Campito, Inc.

Termination of services is possible due to failure to pay tuition and copays promptly, chronic lateness after 5:30 PM, and failure to submit necessary forms and documents as requested (i.e., physical, emergency contact forms, etc.).

Confidentiality Policy

El Campito, Inc. maintains the confidentiality of children's files according to Indiana administrative code 470 IAC 3-4.7-44 requirements. Teachers maintain classroom files containing emergency contact information for each child, the form all about me, the parent volunteer interest form, and the current Child observation record for each child. The office maintains files, including children's medical records,

financial information about the family, and copies of the child's birth certificate. These files are accessible to the Director of Programs and Operations, the Bookkeeper, any Admin staff person, parents/legal guardians, and the regulatory authorities. Please see the attached file documentation checklist for a complete list of documents maintained in El Campito's files. Any reports of alleged child abuse or neglect are maintained in a locked file cabinet in the office. Access to the locked file is limited to the Director(s) and the Business Manager. Copies of IEPs, parent conferences reports, and Behavior incident reports are maintained in the office, with access limited to office personnel and the teachers directly involved. According to Indiana state licensing (the Indiana Administrative Code), El Campito may release information from children's records to the parent or guardian to share child information with other professionals who may be involved in the child's care.