

Manchester Early Learning Center
Equal Access Policy

The Manchester Early Learning Center (MELC) MELC believes there is strength in diversity. We offer equal access to all programs and services and do not discriminate in admission, employment or in any other aspect of our programs and activities that the center operates based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, gender, religion, marital status, disability, political belief, military status or language differences. All childcare programs are inclusive and made available to children without regard to individual ability. Children requiring more individualized attention will have an Individual Care Plan (ICP) created from information shared by the family with staff. Every effort will be made to ensure each child's comfort, confidence, and success in our program.

Children with Special Needs

MELC believes in inclusion of all children in its programs. If a child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan, the MELC staff will assist families in implementing it, as appropriate, in our programming.

Occasionally the staff and family may conclude that a child requires additional types of diagnostic and support services beyond the scope of the MELC program related to her/his emotional, physical or psychological development. The staff will work to assist a family in identifying and obtaining services, as well as providing an appropriate program whenever possible.

No referrals for diagnostic or support services are made without prior written consent from the family. Staff members will work with the family in implementing recommendations resulting from evaluations to support the child. Family confidentiality is maintained in all referrals. Referrals to agencies and persons who provide evaluations, child observations, family counseling, ESL classes, job training and other services that support families are made upon request.

All families should review MELC's Family Handbook. Families of children with special needs may submit a written request for a change to an MELC procedure to John Layer, Director of Operations via email (John@melearning.org). Requests will be reviewed with the Executive Director and families will receive a written response to their request within 10 business days.

Special Care

Prior to a child attending the program, special diets, health conditions and/or allergies must be brought to the attention of the Program Director by the parent/guardian. A written plan of care will be developed and put in place before the child attends the program. This plan must be developed in conjunction with the parent, the staff, the child's physician and MELC Nurse Consultant. We make every effort to make all reasonable accommodations for a child's specific health issues.

MELC may make adaptations to the above for students in our high school program.

Medication

MELC recommends that prescription medicine not be administered during program hours. Parents / Guardians are asked to consult the child's physician and request to prescribe medications in dosages that can be done before or after program hours. If it is necessary to

administer medication, the staff will do so only in accordance with state regulations and our policy.

In the event that medication must be administered during the program, an Authorization to Administer Medication must be on file. This form must be filled out entirely and signed by the child's physician and parent/guardian. This applies to ALL prescription and over the counter medications including but not limited to medicated creams, cough drops, cold medications, fever/pain reducing medication, etc. Medicine must be provided to the MELC in the original prescription container with the name of the medication, expiration date, and child's name, date of birth and strength of medication and dosing instructions clearly labeled on the prescription container. Forms are available from staff or your child's doctor's office.

"Over the counter" topical treatments such as sunscreen and skin lotions without medication require parental permission only. Authorization forms will be provided during registration and are available from staff.

MELC staff will not administer the first dosage of a medication. The first dose should be administered by the parent/guardian at home to evaluate the effectiveness of the medication and to observe possible side effects.

Controlled substances require special handling by staff as required by state law. A staff member trained in the administration of medication will meet individually with parents / guardians to review the policy and procedure, doctor's orders and create a plan for any controlled substances.

As required by the State office of Early Childhood, children may not be in possession of any medicines. This includes asthma inhalers, cough drops, etc. left in a child's lunch box, backpack, etc.

Children who carry inhalers with them throughout the school day may not carry them during MELC's programs. Parents must notify the staff that the child is in possession of such medication and it will be placed out of the reach of the children. Medication will be returned to the child in the morning program to go to class or to the parent/guardian at afternoon pickup. Children who can self-administer inhalers may do so only with written authorization from a doctor and parent. All medication is stored in a locked box out of the reach of children. The only exception would be an epi-pen which is stored out of reach, but not locked. An epi-pen would also accompany staff to the playground or gym. All unused medication shall be returned to the family. If medication is not picked up, the staff will discard it according to our policies.

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