



• 206 N. Baird Lane Murfreesboro, TN 37132 • P.O. Box 413

• Phone: (615) 898-2358 • Fax: (615) 904-8212

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About The Ann Campbell Early (ACE) Learning Center

Mission:

Ann Campbell Early Learning Center (ACE Learning Center) provides a high-quality, inclusive early learning environment that allows children to learn and explore through developmentally appropriate play activities through a partnership with our families and community members.

Vision:

Working together to help children reach their fullest potential.

Values:

Consistency within our program to support every child's development.

High-quality care to support our community.

Individualized support to achieve goals.

Lifelong learners with commitment from all support systems.

Dedicated, determined, and passionate about the work that we do.

What is The Ann Campbell Early (ACE) Learning Center?

The Ann Campbell Early (ACE) Learning Center was established in 1983 by Dr. Ann Campbell and named Project Help (Helping Educate Little People). Dr. Campbell was a professor on the faculty of the Elementary and Special Education Department until she passed away in February 2011. In 2014, both MTSU and the Tennessee Board of Regents approved changing the name to honor Dr. Campbell's work and dedication to the University, community families, and early learning for children-especially those with special needs.

ACE Learning Center engages children (and families) in a variety of fun and exciting educational experiences. Programming and educational activities are based on the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards; assessment data gathered about individual children and recommended practices in inclusive early childhood education.

We believe families are integral to their child's development and our program. We strive to develop strong partnerships with the families and individuals working with and throughout the program. The purpose of this handbook is to provide details and information about the philosophy, policies, and

procedures guiding the work of the ACE Learning Center. We welcome families to ask questions or raise concerns. We welcome active participation in the play and work of the Center.

We offer a comprehensive early learning environment:

- Providing inclusive, developmentally-appropriate classes for children ages 12 months to kindergarten age where young children learn and play together.
- Providing appropriate hands-on learning experiences for university students and others in the community.
- Funded through tuition, MTSU, the United Way of Rutherford & Cannon Counties, and private donations.

I. Curriculum Overview

The Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to meet the individual and group needs of the children in each classroom. The developmental assessment information gathered about each child is used to identify specific, individual goals and objectives to guide teachers in their work with the children. In addition, the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards are used to guide teachers in targeting appropriate learning goals. Learning activities that are appropriate for all children are planned each day. Within all planned learning activities, individual children are guided and supported to engage them in meaningful learning opportunities. Through outside and other gross motor play, center activities, circle times, small group times, and mealtimes, children actively participate and learn from their interactions with materials, peers, and adults. Teachers plan small group times to provide specific learning opportunities for children so each child can achieve his/her individual goals and objectives.

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TNDHS) requires that all programs serving children three and older include instruction in personal safety. This curriculum is provided at least one time per year and includes age-appropriate discussions about personal safety, including the prevention of child abuse. Parents/Guardians have an opportunity to review the curriculum and must acknowledge that they were provided this opportunity. If parents/guardians have questions regarding the curriculum, they should talk with the teacher and/or director.

Child Guidance

The ACE Learning Center staff understands that young children are developing important social and emotional skills. They are committed to teaching children appropriate ways to interact with others and the environment, and communicate their needs and feelings. Children are respected. To facilitate healthy social and emotional development, a warm and nurturing environment is created. Routines with appropriate and reasonable limits are established. Adults model appropriate behavior and use positive words to tell children what they can do. When challenging behaviors exist, children are

distracted, redirected, or provided logical and natural consequences. Children are given choices when possible and taught strategies to communicate their needs and desires. **We do not use physical abuse, humiliation, or verbal abuse to discipline children.**

The use of physical force or restraint is used only with a child for whom this practice is previously approved and is necessary to protect the safety of the child or the other children in the classroom. Only adults trained to use approved physical restraint practices can use them. The parent(s) will receive documentation each time physical restraint is used on their child.

We also adhere to the behavior management and guidance requirements of the Department of Human Services. They are as follows:

- Caregivers must consider children's attention spans and skills so that developmentally inappropriate behavior is not expected.
- Discipline must be reasonable, appropriate, and in terms the children can understand.
- Praise and encouragement of good behavior must be used instead of focusing upon unacceptable behavior only.
- Punishment that is shaming, humiliating, frightening or injurious to children is abusive and must not be used.
- Punishment must not be related to food, rest or toileting.
- Spanking or any other type of corporal punishment is prohibited. ("Corporal punishment" is the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for behavior disapproved by the punisher).

When children exhibit severely challenging behaviors, teachers and parents/guardians develop a plan for addressing those behaviors. In this situation, the following steps will be followed in accordance with the TNDHS Child Care regulation requirements:

1. Teachers will meet with the director to discuss concerns of a child's behaviors. The Behavior Specialist on the Pyramid Model Leadership Team will be notified and kept informed about the concerns and plans to be developed.
2. Teachers will collect data using the Behavior Incident Report (BIR) forms.
3. Teachers and director will meet to discuss data.
4. Teachers, director, and parents/guardians will meet to go over data from observations and discuss a plan on how to work on behaviors. The director may suggest additional resources to the family to support the needs of the child and family outside of the classroom.
5. Parents/Guardians will sign off on plan and determine a date to meet again to reevaluate plan.
6. Teachers will continue to collect data to determine if strategies outlined in the plan are effectively addressing the issue. Parents/Guardians will inform staff of any changes that could cause a change in the child's behavior or any changes in behavior at home.

7. At the date of re-evaluation, the team will decide if the plan needs any revisions. If so, revisions will be made, and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled. If progress is being made, the plan will be continued.
8. Teachers, director, and parents/guardians will continue to have follow up meetings to discuss behavior plan.
9. If the behavior is not resolved and the child's behavior is impacting the safety and/or learning of other children enrolled, the director will request the family to withdraw the child from the program.

Assessment

ACE Learning Center gathers information about each child's development in order to provide appropriate activities and individual learning opportunities during the daily routines of each classroom. Information about your child's thinking and problem solving, motor, communication, social, and self-help skills will be gathered using strategies and tools that are age and developmentally appropriate. In addition, parents/guardians may be asked to provide information about their observations of their child and priorities they have for his/her continued growth and development. The information gathered about each child will be shared with his/her parents/guardians and only those involved in the daily activities of the classrooms.

There may be times in which a child's hearing, vision, communication, or other area of development will be screened by an outside resource (e.g., MTSU Department of Communication Disorders, Lions Club). Prior to those screenings, parents/guardians will be notified and provided with the option for the child to participate or not.

II. General Policies

Hours of Operation

- Monday to Friday: 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM.
- Doors open at 7:30 AM and close at 5:00 PM.

MTSU is a Tobacco-Free Campus:

The use of all tobacco products, including cigarettes, pipes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and smokeless electronic cigarettes, is prohibited (<https://www.mtsu.edu/tobaccofree/>)

Application and Enrollment

ACE Learning Center, as a department of Middle Tennessee State University, in its educational programs and activities involving students and employees, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age (as applicable), or status as a covered veteran or genetic information.

Application to the Ann Campbell Early Learning Center can be made online at <http://acelearningcenter.mtsu.edu/apply/>. Once an application is received, the family is contacted to discuss Application and Enrollment availability of current openings and/or the need to put the child's name on the waiting list. Enrollment is determined based on the age of the child, the developmental needs of the child, the date of application, and classroom compatibility. Our goal is to balance each classroom with a group of children who can play and learn with each other as well as from each other. Siblings of currently enrolled children also are given priority when age-appropriate openings are available.

When an opening is available, a staff member will contact the parents/guardians to inform them of the opening. If parents/guardians are interested in the spot, a tour will be scheduled for the child and family. Once the offer is accepted, the parents/guardians will receive enrollment paperwork that must be completed prior to the child's first day. A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$50 is required at the time of intake.

If parents/guardians wish for their child to attend the Center on a different schedule than originally registered, they should complete the Request Form. This form alerts the staff that a change is desired. The Director will review the request and determine if it can be granted based on current enrollment. If the parents/guardian's request cannot be granted immediately, the parents/guardian's request for change will be noted and will occur as soon as the enrollment allows. The parents/guardians will be notified of the decision by email, phone, or in person. Parents/Guardians requesting a decrease in days must give written notice at least two weeks before the date of the schedule change. If a two weeks' notice is not given, ACE will bill at the originally agreed upon rate for two weeks from the date of notice.

Classroom Assignments

A child's chronological age on August 15 is used to determine appropriate classroom assignment.

- Green Room: For children aged 12 to 30 months. The adult-to-child ratio is 1:6, with a maximum group size of 12.
- Blue Room: For children aged 2.5 to 4 years. The adult-to-child ratio is 1:11, with a maximum group size of 20.

- Red Room: For children aged 3 to 5 years. The adult-to-child ratio is 1:13, with a maximum group size of 22.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

At drop-off and pick-up, parents/guardians may park in the breezeway. Parking in these spaces should be limited to the time needed to briefly sign in or out and escort their child to or from their classroom. Parents/guardians must always accompany their child while moving through the building.

We take the safety of children, university students, therapists, visitors, teachers, and staff very seriously. Door access codes must not be shared with anyone, as doing so is considered a security breach. If a code is shared, the individual will lose their ability to use the door access system. Parents and guardians are provided access codes upon enrollment, while others seeking a code must submit a request to a member of management. When dropping off a child, the person bringing them must escort the child to their classroom before signing them in via the Procure system or the sign-in form. Note: only one option is required. When picking up a child, the person must sign the child out using the Procure system or the sign-out form before retrieving them from their classroom. Once a child is signed out, responsibility for the child belongs to the person who signs the child out.

Children nap daily from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We do not allow drop-offs or pick-ups during this time. In case of an emergency, please contact ACE to make special arrangements for picking-up or dropping-off during nap time. Parking

Parking

The safety of our children, families, and staff is our top priority, and your cooperation plays a vital role in ensuring this. We kindly ask for your attention to the following guidelines:

1. Drive Slowly: Please maintain the campus posted speed limit or less when entering and navigating the parking lot.
2. Be Alert: Watch carefully for children, families, and staff crossing or walking near vehicles.
3. Park Responsibly: Use designated parking spaces and avoid blocking entrances, exits, or other vehicles.
4. Stay Patient: Drop-off and pick-up times can be busy. A little extra patience ensures a smoother and safer experience for everyone.
5. Follow Parking Lot Flow: Adhere to any directional signs or cones in the lot to help maintain an orderly flow of traffic.

We understand that mornings and evenings can be busy, but by taking a few extra moments to prioritize safety, we can protect everyone.

Permission to Pick up

Parents or guardians must provide a written list of individuals who are authorized to pick up their child from Ann Campbell Early Learning Center. Anyone picking up a child for the first time will be required to present a valid photo ID. If changes need to be made to the list, families should request a Permission to Pick Up form from their child's classroom teacher or from the front office. Please be aware that if an administrator is unfamiliar with the person arriving for pickup, they may ask for identification, even if that individual has shown ID to another staff member in the past. This added step ensures the continued safety of all children in our care.

We will not release a child to anyone who is not listed on the Permission to Pick Up form unless written authorization is provided in advance. This written approval must come directly from a parent or guardian through the email address we have on file or a ProCare message. The individual picking up the child must present appropriate photo identification at the time of pickup.

Permission to Observe

ACE Learning Center has observation booths that are available to parents or legal guardians. The purpose of the booth is to provide a place in which parents/guardians can watch their own children as they participate in activities during the day. We also have University students who use the observation booths to complete course requirements. In an effort to protect the privacy of our children, we only allow students in the booth who have provided documentation that the observation is required for a specific course. We ensure students know about confidentiality and appropriate behavior in the booth. Students are required to sign in and out when observing at ACE.

It is critical that anyone observing in the booth follow these specific guidelines:

- Talk quietly with others and only discuss your child.
- Under no circumstances can observers take pictures or video record their own child or any other child in the classroom.

We provide a Permission to Observe form for you to identify the names of anyone allowed to observe your child from the observation booth. We do not allow additional family members, caregivers, friends, or professionals to observe your child without your written permission. Request to edit the list can be made at any time.

Holidays and Closings

As part of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), the Ann Campbell Early Learning Center (ACE) follows the University's closure schedule. When MTSU is closed, ACE is also closed. Additionally, ACE may extend University holidays to provide time for staff development, vacations, planning, and center-wide activities. Occasionally, the center may close due to unusual circumstances, such as health-related issues or the passing of a staff member. In such cases, parents and guardians will be notified of any unexpected closures in advance. For the latest updates on closures, please check Procure, our website, or our Facebook page. A calendar detailing all openings and closures is provided at enrollment or on July 1 for the upcoming fiscal year.

Inclement Weather

The ACE Learning Center follows the University's policy regarding inclement weather. MTSU's General Guidelines for inclement weather are as follows:

"When the Provost and Vice President for Business and Finance make the decision to close the campus or delay the start of classes, the regional media will be notified as soon as reasonably possible prior to the standard 8:00 a.m. reporting time for staff and before the start of the earliest scheduled class. The announcement will apply to all credit and non-credit classes for the period affected; that is, morning, afternoon, or evening, according to the specific scripts below. The MTSU website will also carry a message regarding the status of classes and opening of offices (<https://www.mtsu.edu/policies/p725/>).

On occasion, the ACE Learning Center may need to open late or close due to inclement weather that is not in line with the MTSU weather policy. Families should listen to the radio and/or television announcements regarding childcare/University closings to know the intentions of ACE Learning Center's hours of operation. If the Center is open and families choose to keep their child at home, they should inform the Center.

Child Absences

When a child is unable to attend the program, the parent should notify the Center as soon as possible. In addition, parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the Center as soon as possible about any illness or disease their child has which may affect other children and staff.

Childcare Sick Policy:

At Ann Campbell Early Learning Center, the health and safety of all children and staff are our top priority. To maintain a healthy environment, we have a clear policy regarding illness and temperature-related symptoms. Please review the guidelines below carefully.

1. Temperature Policy

Definition: A child is considered unwell if their body temperature reaches 100.0°F (37.8°C) or higher.

- If a child develops a temperature while at the center, they will be sent home immediately.

2. When Can My Child Return?

To reduce the spread of illness and protect the well-being of everyone in our care, the following must be met before a child returns to the center:

Next Day Rule

1. The child must remain at home the entire day after being sent home due to a high temperature.
2. The child must have a normal body temperature without the use of temperature-reducing medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Symptom-Free

- In addition to having a normal temperature without medication, the child must not show any other signs of illness, such as vomiting, diarrhea, or excessive coughing.

Medical Clearance

- If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness (such as flu, strep throat, or COVID-19), a note from a healthcare provider may be required before they can return, confirming that it is safe for them to do so.

3. Why Is This Important?

An elevated body temperature is often a sign of infection, and children can still be contagious even after symptoms improve. Requiring a full day at home helps reduce the risk of spreading illness and supports a safer, healthier environment for all.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a healthy space for every child, family, and staff member. If you have any questions about this policy, please feel free to reach out to our administration team.

Snacks and Lunch

We do not heat food at the center. To ensure meals are kept at a safe and comfortable temperature, we recommend that families use thermoses, insulated containers, or ice packs to keep food warm or cold as needed.

Requests for exceptions due to dietary restrictions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A doctor's note must be provided, and approval must be granted by the director before accommodations can be arranged.

We encourage families to follow the USDA MyPlate guidelines, which recommend including:

- 2 fruits/vegetables
- 1 grain/bread
- 1 protein (meat or meat alternative)
- Dairy

Milk and water are the best beverage choices. For information on appropriate serving sizes and healthy food options, visit the USDA MyPlate website at Myplate.gov.

Please avoid sending foods where sugar or corn syrup is listed as the first ingredient.

We do not heat food at the center, so we recommend using thermoses, insulated containers, or ice packs to keep food warm or cold as needed.

For the safety of children under five, please avoid sending food that may pose a choking hazard. Examples include:

- Hot dogs (whole or cut into rounds)
- Whole grapes or cherry tomatoes
- Nuts - Popcorn
- Raw peas
- Hard pretzels or chips
- Spoonfuls of almond butter
- Large chunks of raw carrots or meat

If a child in the classroom has a diagnosed food allergy, we will notify all families and ask that they do not send any food items containing the identified allergen. This helps us maintain a safe environment for all children in our care.

Mealtimes are an excellent opportunity for children to practice important life skills, and we encourage independence during snacks and meals. If you have questions about your child's specific needs or how to meet the lunch guidelines, please speak with the child's teacher or the Director.

Photographs and Videos

ACE Learning Center requests permission from all parents/guardians to use photographs of their children in posters, flyers, brochures, and other publications. We also participate in public awareness, promotional, or educational activities in which videos are needed to demonstrate the work of ACE Learning Center. Without permission, photographs or videos of children will not be used in this manner.

Parental Involvement

Parents/guardians of children enrolled in any ACE Learning Center classroom are encouraged to be active participants in the Center. We hope parents/guardians will readily share important information about their children on an ongoing and regular basis. Our classroom staff need to know children's interests, preferences, approaches to learning, and needs in order to support them effectively throughout the day. We encourage parents/guardians to join the ACE Parent Group that meets up to 4 times a year.

A monthly newsletter is shared with all parents/guardians to let them know more about what is happening in each classroom and the Center as a whole. Classroom teachers report daily about each child's learning experience and behaviors such as interactions, meals, and toileting. Teachers send out a weekly Procure message to parents/guardians letting them know about the week prior and the week ahead. Parent/guardian conferences are scheduled twice a year to discuss children's developmental progress and to identify goals for future learning. In addition, conversations between parents/guardians and teachers happen regularly. However, teachers are responsible for the classroom children during drop off and pick up times and are unable to fully engage with families for any lengthy conversations at these times. If you want to talk at length with the teacher during these times, please let us know and we can provide appropriate classroom coverage.

Other opportunities for family involvement occur throughout the year. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to let staff know if they have a specific interest in supporting the Center or their child's classroom.

Additional Daily Needs

1. Each child must have a change of clothing with his/her name clearly marked on each clothing article and placed in a labeled bag to be left at the center for emergencies.
2. All children should be dressed for play. Their clothes should be washable and shoes suitable for vigorous activity. (Flip-flops and other open-toed shoes are not acceptable.) Outdoor play is an important part of our program. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to ensure the child is dressed appropriately to play outside each day that the temperature is between **32°F and 95°F**.
3. Parents/Guardians are required to keep diapers or pull-ups and baby wipes supplied for their child. If working on toilet training, more than one change of clothes will likely be required.
4. ACE Learning Center provides nap cots/mats, crib sheets, and blanket covers. Any special naptime needs should be discussed with the teaching staff.

Classroom Environment Policy

We believe in showing respect to young children. We do not use humiliation, ridicule, verbal abuse, sarcasm or physical punishment to discipline your child. Our goal is to help your child learn self-control, and self- management skills. We will do the following things in order to accomplish this goal and follow the pyramid model framework:

- a. Build relationships by creating a warm, nurturing environment
- b. Model appropriate behavior
- c. Set appropriate & reasonable limits based on developmental level
- d. Have a routine
- e. Use positive words by telling children what they can do rather than what they cannot do
- f. Use logical and natural consequences
- g. Listen to and watch children to interpret verbal & nonverbal language
- h. Distract, divert, or redirect children when possible
- i. Provide choices to promote independence
- j. Be as flexible as possible
- k. <https://challengingbehavior.org/pyramid-model/overview/basics/>

Code of Conduct

The Ann Campbell Early Learning Center is committed to providing a safe secure learning environment for all who work, play and visit our program. The Center's Family Handbook includes references to

practices and procedures followed regarding the confidentiality and safety of everyone on the center's premises. These practices and procedures are referenced in this document as a Code of Conduct.

Confidentiality

The Center takes the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of children and families associated with our program seriously. Staff, parents and students need to be aware of and protect the confidentiality of all children and families, not just their own.

Use of appropriate language

Staff, parents, students, and visitors must understand that young children are present in our building. The Center prohibits the use of language on our premises that is inappropriate or detrimental to the well-being of our children, such as profane language, explicit sexual language or content, hateful speech, discriminatory remarks and threats of violence.

Safety Practices

The Center has policies and procedures in place to maintain a safe environment for all children, staff and parents as referenced throughout the ACE Handbook. These practices include personal safety, safety in emergency situations and safety from harm by anyone whose behavior could cause harm to themselves, others, or the environment. Safety practices must be followed by all individuals on our premises. One of the behavior expectations for the center is Be Safe. Posters are hung around the Center defining the rules to follow to support this behavior expectation. These include, but are not limited to, observing guidelines for driving safely in our parking lot, supervising children as you enter or exit the building, walking in the hallways, opening the secured front door for your family and no one else, and being mindful of personal belongings brought into the center during drop off and pick up time.

The Center promotes open communication and discussion. Upon the occurrence of an event or behavior that may be contrary to the expectations of this Code of Conduct, the following procedures will be used.

The Center staff may direct that the parties immediately cease the potentially offending behavior. If the behavior continues after being asked to stop, the offending party will be asked to leave the premises immediately. If the party refuses to leave or continues with inappropriate behavior, the MTSU police will be contacted. In the event of behavior that requires Center staff to contact University Police, the offending party will not be allowed back on the premises and their access code will be deactivated until a meeting is held.

A meeting will be scheduled with the parties involved in the incident, the director of the Center, the Early Learning Programs Director, and others deemed appropriate, to discuss the situation and determine a productive outcome. This meeting shall take place as soon as possible after the alleged offending conduct, with appropriate consideration to allow the parties involved adequate time to regain their composure and reflect on the events prior to the meeting taking place. For events involving multiple parties, separate meetings may take place as necessary, at the discretion of Center staff. In the event that all parties do not come to a mutual agreement on the outcomes for the behavior, the director of early learning programs, with approval from the Dean, will determine any further restrictions or consequences.

University police will also be contacted for any situations where staff feel the safety of anyone on the premise is threatened, where the conduct of a party may be criminal in nature, or where mandatory reporting to law enforcement is required by law.

For the safety and security of all children, families and visitors should not approach or interact with children through the playground fence. Instead, please follow the center's entry and check-in procedures.

III. Payments and Tuition Policies

Tuition is due monthly in advance of services. Each family will receive a billing statement for next month's services on or before the last Monday of the month. Tuition must be paid in full by the 5th of the month. Tuition paid after the 5th of the month will be charged a 5% late fee. Tuition is a fixed monthly rate. Families will be billed for the following University Holidays when ACE is closed: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday). ACE will also be closed the week of 4th of July and two weeks in December.

If a family has difficulty with making timely payments as described in previous paragraph, it is the family's responsibility to notify a member of management to discuss the options for establishing a payment plan. If a family fails to make timely payments for 2 months in a row, or there are 3 late payments within a fiscal year, the child will not be allowed to return to the center until full payment is received or a plan to meet financial obligation for past services, as well as a plan to make future payments, is agreed upon between the Director and the family. All past fees and tuition are due at time of exit as agreed upon at the beginning of placement. If a family leaves the program with no plan to pay any balance due, their name will be shared with MTSU Accounts Receivable and procedures for collecting will be implemented.

You may be eligible for financial assistance to pay for your child's care through the Tennessee Department of Human Services Smart Steps program. Click here for more information about eligibility.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/child-care-payment-assistance.html>

The Director will contact the family to discuss unpaid tuition if the tuition has not been paid in full 2 months in a row, or 3 late payments within a fiscal year. Families are responsible for notifying the Director of any hardships or concerns about ability to pay this financial obligation. Families with unpaid tuition 3 months in a row, or 4 late payments within a fiscal year, will meet with the ACE Learning Center Director to discuss more appropriate programs to meet the family's needs. All fees and tuition will be due at time of exit as agreed upon at the beginning of placement. The parent's/guardian's name will be submitted to MTSU Accounts Receivable and procedures for collecting will be implemented.

Monthly Tuition

Schedules	Green Room	Blue Room	Red Room
5 Days	\$1,100	\$1000	\$900
4 Days	\$880	\$800	\$720
3 Days	\$671	\$610	\$549
2 Days	\$484	\$440	\$396

There will be a 15% discounted rate for any additional children within each family enrolled at the center. The discount is applied to the second child or to the child who attends fewer days and/or less time.

Late Pickup Fees

ACE Learning Center closes promptly at 5:00 p.m. If a child is not picked up by 5:00 PM, the parents/guardians are charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute late per child. At 5:10, this rate will go to \$2 for every minute late per child. There will be no exceptions or warnings ensuring that this policy is applied consistently and fairly to everyone. We ask that you call us if you will be late and give us an approximate arrival time so that we can better comfort your child. After two late pickups of 10 or more minutes in a semester or three in a fiscal year, the Director will contact the parents/guardians for a conference. After three late pickups of 10 or more minutes in a semester or four late pickups in a fiscal year, the ACE Learning Center Director will meet with the family to discuss more appropriate programs to meet the family's work and childcare schedule. All late fees collected will be used for classroom

purchases, and these fees will be applied to the following month's tuition unless the family is unenrolling from the center.

Termination

A two-week written notice is required to terminate a child's enrollment. If notice is not provided, two weeks of tuition will be assessed from the date the withdrawal is communicated. This fee will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian. If the parent/guardian fails to meet the obligation to pay the full amount of fees or provide the required notice as agreed upon at the beginning of the placement, the parent's/guardian's name will be submitted to MTSU Accounts Receivable and procedures for collecting the fees will be implemented.

When a parent terminates his/her child's enrollment from ACE Learning Center, the slot will be filled as soon as possible. The parent may have his/her child's name put back on the waiting list if he/she anticipates a time in the future when programming will again be appropriate.

IV. University Student Support and Research Policies

In order to better serve the needs of the children in the program and to support training and research at MTSU, ACE Learning Center provides hands-on training to MTSU, Motlow State Community College, and other students. These students are aware that ACE Learning Center is an inclusive early childhood program. They are observing and working in classrooms under the strict supervision of the teaching staff. All students spending time in a classroom are oriented to the program and informed of confidentiality and other classroom policies. If parents/guardians are concerned about a specific University student, they should inform the classroom teacher or the Director of the program.

From time to time, ACE Learning Center is asked to participate in research projects for MTSU faculty or their students. Each research opportunity will be considered individually in terms of benefits to the program, staff, and/or children. Prior to any child participating in research, parents/guardians will be provided information about the research opportunity and given the option for their child to participate or not. All research conducted at MTSU must be reviewed and approved by the MTSU Institutional Review Board, an entity supported by the MTSU Office of Compliance.

Privacy Practice

Federal law requires that ACE Learning Center keep facts about children's health, development, and education private. Private Health Information (PHI) means information about children's health, health services, and the kinds of services received from ACE Learning Center. When a child is enrolled in an ACE Learning Center program, certain facts are shared by parents/guardians. Examples of these facts

include: name, birthdate, address, phone numbers, eligibility information for special services, individualized education/family plans, hospital stays, service plans, personal health information, notes or records from your child's doctor or therapists, lists of illnesses past and present, and lists of medicines currently taken or taken before being enrolled.

When parents/guardians enroll their child in the ACE Learning Center, they may complete one or more Release of Information forms for therapists, early intervention/public school programs, or other professionals who are involved with the child. We **CANNOT** share information about any child without the parents' or legal guardian's written consent. A parent/legal guardian may rescind their consent at any time by writing a letter stating that they do not wish for information to be shared with a specific person, agency, or program. If a child's personal information has already been shared with the guardian's/parent's permission, we cannot take it back. Signed Release of Information forms must be updated annually.

Parents/Guardians of enrolled children have the right to:

- ✓ See and get copies of the child's records.
- ✓ Ask us to change health information that is wrong. This should be done in writing.
- ✓ Ask us for a list of who received your child's health or educational information. Families must ask for this information in writing. Please know that by law we do not have to give you a list when you have signed the Release of Information forms.
- ✓ Ask us not to share certain facts about your child's health or education. This request must be made in writing and should outline the information that should not be shared and with whom.
- ✓ Rescind an authorization form, or Release of Information form. This must be made in writing.
- ✓ Ask for a new notice of our privacy practices and policies.

Parents/Guardians may send their written request to the center.

Medical Information

Prior to enrollment, a current signed Certificate of Immunization by the Tennessee Department of Health must be provided. To maintain enrollment, administration of immunizations must remain in accordance with the state requirements. As immunizations are received, the Tennessee Immunization Form must be updated and submitted to the ACE Learning Center.

Accident Reports

From time to time, children are involved in accidents or incidents while at the ACE Learning Center. When minor accidents occur, staff will attend to the child administering first aid if needed. An accident

report will be completed outlining the description of the accident, nature of the injury, first aid administered, activity and people present when the accident occurred. Parents/Guardians are notified about the accident by phone, note, Procure message, email, or in person, and will receive a copy of the accident report at the end of the school day. Staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid.

Liability

Every effort will be made to provide a safe and secure environment for the children. All children are closely supervised throughout the day. However, accidents can happen. MTSU provides liability insurance to cover any accidents that occur during the ACE hours of operation.

Administering Medicine

When possible, families should administer medications to their children prior to and after the school day. However, if a child must receive medication during the day, the following procedures must be followed by families and staff:

- All medications will be received by a management level staff member or the child's lead classroom teacher.
- Prescription medications must be stored in a prescription bottle. All other medications must be in their original container.
- No medication will be administered to a child by a member of the ACE staff without the following documentation. This documentation will be collected at the time of receiving the medication:
 - An ACE medication form, both signed and dated by the legal parent/guardian of the child and an ACE staff member giving permission to administer the medication. This will be placed in the child's file.
 - Specific directions for dosage and times to be administered must be on medication label. (Medication will never be administered in bottles or infant feeders unless authorized by a physician.)
- Most medications will be stored in a lockable cabinet when not in use. The medication will be placed in a Ziploc bag with the child's name, doctor's name, and doctor's phone number on it. The specific directions for administering the medication will be in the bag. Medication requiring refrigeration will be stored in a locked container with the documentation noted above. Medication requiring emergency administration, as directed by the physician, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant (e.g., "EpiPen", asthma inhaler) will be kept in an unlocked container that is inaccessible to children.

- Medications will be administered by the child's lead classroom teacher. If the lead teacher is unavailable, the child's classroom co-teacher will administer the medication.
- The following documentation will be kept by the ACE Learning Center staff each time the medication is administered:
 - The date and time of administration.
 - The name and signature of the staff member administering the medication.
 - Any noticeable side effects.
- The parent/guardian will verify documentation by staff with a signature at the end of the period of medication administration.
- Parents/Guardians will verify by signature that they received the unused portion of the medication.

Seizures

From time to time, children who have seizures will be enrolled in an ACE Learning Center program. When this is the case, families must ensure that the classroom teachers receive specific details in writing and through conversation about the characteristics of the child's seizures, appropriate staff responses, and specific medication or medical responses. A specific response protocol should be provided by the child's physician and kept on file in the child's classroom. Should a seizure occur during the day, staff will call 911 if:

- The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes.
- There is one seizure after another without waking.
- The child is hurt during the seizure.
- The child has difficulty breathing or their color turns blue.
- They do not know when the seizure started.
- The child has never had this type of seizure before.
- Staff administers prescribed medication to the child.

If the characteristics of the seizures, responses, or medications change, parents/guardians must notify the ACE Learning Center staff in writing.

Allergies/Asthma

If a child has allergies or asthma that requires a specific response, parents/guardians must inform the ACE Learning Center staff upon enrollment. If medication is needed, ACE Learning Center must have the medication labeled with the child's name and physician's name and phone number provided (see administering medication policy for specific procedures).

For children with food allergies and/or asthma, we must have an emergency protocol signed by the child's physician. BEFORE they can enter the classroom. In addition, parents/guardians must notify the ACE Learning Center if medication, treatment, or phone numbers change. If your child has severe food allergies or food protocol, ACE Learning Center reserves the right to ask the family to provide all food and beverages for their child while he/she is at the Center.

Medical Emergencies

If a child should have a medical emergency while at the ACE Learning Center, staff will call 911. Emergency transportation will transport the child to St. Thomas Rutherford Hospital. Parents/Guardians will be notified as soon as possible after the emergency occurs. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, other persons listed as emergency contacts will be called. If no one can be reached, the child's physician will be called. Parents/Guardians must ensure all forms are up to date in case of changes to phone numbers or other emergency contact information.

Fire and Natural Disaster Emergencies

Specific safety procedures are in place in the event of a fire or a natural disaster. Fire drills are completed monthly. Tornado drills occur regularly. During a fire, children are moved to the farthest areas of the playgrounds for both sites. In case of a tornado, children are moved to safe inner locations in each of our sites. The safety of the children is our first priority. Children will not be released during a safety drill or when under a tornado warning or any other emergency requiring lock-down. Families receive a note at the end of the day if any drills or actual emergencies requiring lock-down occurred that day.

Emergency Situations

The MTSU Campus Police or Murfreesboro City Police will contact us in the event that there is a potential threat to the safety and welfare of the children and staff. Specific procedures are followed in these situations.

1. If the children are in their classroom, the teacher will lock the classroom doors, both front and back, while the teacher assistant and/or MTSU students calmly move the children to an area of safety within the classroom. The Center will remain in the lock-down state until given official notice that the threat to children's safety is gone.
2. If the children are on the playground, the teacher and teacher assistant will calmly move the children into the classroom farthest away from the threat, locking each door behind them and

ensuring that the classroom door is locked as well. The Center will remain in the lock-down state until given official notice that the danger has passed.

3. During this time, the Director will be in contact with the appropriate authorities regarding the situation.
4. When the threat of danger has been cleared, families and staff will be allowed to enter and exit the building.
5. If appropriate, families may be contacted and asked to remove the children as soon as the immediate danger has ended.
6. Parents/Guardians will be notified at pick up on the day of the potential threat.

Procedures for Child Abuse Investigations

Individuals providing support to young children have a legal obligation to report cases of suspected child abuse. Parents/Guardians also have an obligation to report such suspicions. Tennessee state law says that the person suspecting the abuse must report it. Reports of suspected abuse can be made to the Department of Children's Services (615-217-8900) or to the Tennessee Abuse Hotline (1-800-237-0004). Once a call is made, an investigation will follow. At ACE Learning Center, we require background checks for all employees and University students spending extended time in the classroom. All other individuals who spend time in the classroom are not left alone with children. Our priority is creating a safe environment for all children.

Bathroom Supervision Plan

The ACE staff member will oversee the bathroom area and provide assistance as needed for each child. Staff will ensure proper hand washing is done after using the bathroom.

The potty will be cleaned with bleach and water spray after each individual child.

VI. Service Providers and Therapists

Ann Campbell Early (ACE) Learning Center welcomes individual therapists to the Center and strives to support children to meet the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals set by the family and others during the IFSP meeting. As an early learning center, we recognize the importance of the early years and support laying the foundation to provide the best learning environment to encourage optimal development. We value the input of therapists and recognize the importance of working together to maximize each child's learning opportunities.

ACE works closely with the MTSU Home and Community-Based Early Intervention program and follows the same philosophy regarding serving children in their natural environment and teaching through

natural routines. While at ACE, the natural routines include the activities and events that occur throughout the day including large and small group activities, mealtimes, outside play, and naps.

To support this philosophy, ACE Learning Center requires the delivery of therapy to occur during and within the natural routines of the classroom and with the use of our resources and materials. Our teachers want to learn from therapists to provide ongoing opportunities for the child to practice, and eventually master, a skill or task throughout the week when the therapist is not there. The staff at ACE will gladly work with the therapist to provide access to resources or materials available at the center.

If the therapy provided is not conducive to being taught in the natural routine of the day, the family and therapist should consider alternate locations for the therapy session.

ACE Learning Center is not designed to provide space for individual therapy sessions.

We look forward to working with the therapists who support the children who attend our center. Together we can make therapy visits successful for the child as well as the teacher and other children in the classroom.

Additional resources to support children's learning in natural environments and the integration of support services in the natural environment are listed as follows:

Natural Environments/Routines

<http://www.eiexcellence.org/evidence-based-practices/natural-environments/>