



for communication, behavior, and development

Child Development Center Parent Handbook

**7784 Innovation Park Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70820**

225-343-4232 Fax 343-4233

www.emergela.org



PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The Therapeutic Preschool Program at Emerge is designed for preschool-age children with delays and disorders in speech, language, learning, motor skills, or overall development, inclusive of children with diagnoses such as Autism and related disorders and Childhood Apraxia of Speech. The program is housed in the Children's Development Center, a therapeutic wing of the Emerge Center.

ENROLLMENT:

In order to best meet the individual needs of the child, a complete speech and language evaluation is needed prior to enrollment in the program. Evaluations may be conducted at the Emerge Center and should be scheduled through the main office. Alternately, recent speech-language evaluations (completed within the previous 6 month period) from outside sources may be accepted. If evaluation results suggest that group speech-language therapy would be beneficial to the child, then the child would be placed in a group appropriate for his/her age, language level, attention, and developmental needs.

PROGRAM DESIGN:

A key component of the therapeutic preschool program is group speech-language therapy, which is a developmentally appropriate, structured environment that provides intensive speech and language stimulation to small groups of peers in the context of a typical preschool "routine." All groups are led by certified and licensed speech-language pathologists.

Group times and days are variable. Groups range from 1-hour to 3-hours in length and typically meet 2-3 times per week. Placement decisions are made by the professional staff, based on parent input and the needs of the child. The number of children per group varies but is kept purposefully low (typical enrollment is 6-8 children per group). Each group also has 1-2 classroom aides working under the direction of the speech-language pathologist.

Further therapies may be added to provide a complete treatment program based on the needs of each child. Additional therapies include: Applied Behavior Analysis, individual speech-language therapy, and occupational therapy. Other supportive services available at Emerge include: audiology, social work services and psychological services.

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

ABA sessions are supervised by a licensed behavior analyst. Sessions are conducted by a certified line technician and each session targets language, social, and self-help skills. Skills are worked on in the ABA setting and practiced in the group setting as appropriate.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational Therapy addresses sensory, fine motor and feeding issues. OT may be integrated into the group language sessions or conducted as separate individual sessions, depending on the needs of the child.

INDIVIDUAL SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPY

Individual Speech Language Therapy supplements the group speech-language services and allows the therapist to work one-on-one with the child to target more specific speech and language goals.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Periodic hearing screening gives families peace of mind that their child will receive the most benefit from therapeutic services. Also available are custom noise reduction and swim ear plugs. The extended family might benefit from our full range of audiology services available to people of all ages, including hearing testing, hearing aid fitting, and testing for auditory processing disorders (school-age children).

PARENT TRAINING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Full psycho-educational evaluations are available and are conducted by a licensed psychologist. Parent training to address behavioral management issues such as noncompliance, aggression, school difficulties, and social skills are also available in a one-on-one setting with a licensed psychologist and the child and family. These services would be billed separately at the individual therapy rates.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

The Emerge Center offers mental health counseling provided by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Individual and/or family counseling is available upon request. Counseling may address, but is not limited to: parental stress, marital stress, depression, anxiety, and/or education regarding community resources. Services can be confidentially requested by calling The Emerge Center and requesting to speak with the Social Worker.

INTEGRATED AUTISM SERVICES

Preschool-age children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) participate fully in the therapeutic preschool program, with treatment designed to meet their individual needs. Children may receive one or all of the above therapeutic services. Each child's program depends on his or her needs and availability of each service.

TUITION BASED PROGRAMS

Bloom Program

The Bloom program is a yearlong, tuition based program that provides a full time therapeutic learning environment for clients benefiting from the combination of ABA, group speech, therapy, individual speech therapy, and occupational therapy. Enrollment for this program occurs in the spring and summer.

Emerge Kindergarten

The Emerge Kindergarten is a 9-month tuition based program led by a certified special education teacher. Each student has individual education goals set based on his or her own skill with the overall goal of increasing independence and preparing the student for his or her next learning environment. Enrollment for this program occurs in the spring and summer

FEES FOR SERVICES

The Emerge Center accepts a variety of private insurances, Medicaid, and private pay. Clients with private insurance are responsible for any co-pays, co-insurances or deductibles as written in their plan. Payment is due at the time of service. It is your responsibility to know your insurance benefits, coverage, and limits for each service your child receives at the center. Failure to pay amounts due will result in the possible suspension of therapeutic services.

An Easy Pay service is available as a convenient payment option. If you are interested in this service, please complete the Easy Pay enrollment form.

If the status of your insurance or Medicaid coverage should change, you are responsible for informing the Emerge Center office staff immediately. Office staff can be contacted at 225-343-4232. Ask to speak with the managed care analyst or billing and claims analyst.

ATTENDANCE

Because progress is dependent on consistent attendance, each child must attend therapy on a regular basis. In fairness to both the children enrolled and those children on our waiting list, any child **with more than 3 consecutive unexcused absences, or any child with variable/reduced attendance rates, may be removed from the roll. Parents should call the treating therapist or main office prior to any missed session to report illness or other valid reasons for absence. Extended or excess absences are not acceptable. Written, valid excuses and/or extenuating family circumstances will be reviewed by the Executive Staff, with decisions about continued enrollment made on an individual basis.**

CHILD ABUSE POLICY & RESPONSIBILITY UNDER LAW

All staff at the Emerge Center are mandated reporters, therefore, as required by law, any signs of suspected child abuse and/or neglect will be reported to the Department of Children and Family Services. We will conference with the child's parents at the same time. If you have any questions regarding what may be considered abuse and/or neglect and what must be reported by law, please visit <http://dss.louisiana.gov> or speak with the social worker on staff.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information about your child will remain private and confidential. No information will be released without parental consent.

EMERGENCY AND WEATHER RELATED PROBLEMS

The Emerge Center typically **follows school closure procedures according to East Baton Rouge Parish School System**. You will be notified by Emerge staff of any openings or closings different from EBRP. Listen to T.V. and radio announcements for EBRP schools; The Emerge Center will adhere to these same instructions for closure or early dismissal.

MEDICINES

We do not administer medicines without a doctor's orders. Please give the doctor's orders to the therapist, along with the medication in a Ziploc bag clearly labeled with the name of the child. A parent or guardian will be required to fill out a medication release form as well. Your therapist will provide you with the necessary form.

ILLNESS

Our goal is to prevent the spread of illness. We ask parents to adhere to the following guidelines and to cooperate with our policies for the good of all. If your child shows any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours, please keep him/ her home:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Pink eye
- Head lice
- Fever (99.4 or higher) measured ancillary
- Symptom of any communicable disease (Note: Please notify the Program Director of any communicable disease your child has such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, etc.)

If your child becomes sick while at The Emerge Center, you will be called to pick up your child promptly. If parents cannot be reached, alternate names from the Emergency Contact form will be called.

Your child must be symptom-free without medication for 24 hours before returning to the Emerge Preschool Program.

FIELD TRIPS

Occasionally, the Emerge Center may plan a field trip. Advance notice of upcoming field trips will be provided and parent permission will be required for your child to participate. You are encouraged to attend the field trips with your child. Fees will be based on the particular trip and will be kept to a minimum.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

You are responsible to alert your child's therapist of any changes in your phone number, address, or contact information, so that changes can be made on your child's emergency contact form. It is extremely important that we are able to reach you in the event of an emergency or illness.

DISCIPLINE

All children will be treated with kindness and consideration. Mutual respect between therapists and children is expected. Within the classroom, we work to eliminate any unacceptable behaviors using techniques of distraction, substitution, "time out" or direct remediation of the problem. We remind the child what is expected of him/her and we are patient, consistent, and encouraging. Each therapist will develop an appropriate discipline plan for each child if needed and will communicate and coordinate this with the parents. Jane Morton, Ph. D. works with our staff and families on behavior management strategies when needed.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

It is most important for your child to come to school comfortable and suitably dressed for the weather. Please label all articles of clothing with your child's name, and send a light jacket or sweater on cool days because we do go outside. For playground safety reasons, children should wear **tennis shoes with socks**. Please no boots or sandals.

BOOKSACKS AND NOTEBOOKS

Your child will need a book sack, preferably the kind that zips or snaps at the top, just big enough to hold a notebook and change of clothes. This gives your child the independence to handle their own book sack. **Parents check your child's book sack daily** for important papers and notes.

SUPPLY LIST/SNACK LIST

Parents will be asked to bring classroom supplies and snacks on a rotating basis based on the first letter of the child's last name. Your therapist will provide you with a schedule.

DROP OFF AND PICK-UP POLICY

Please be prompt when dropping off and picking up your child. Sign in and out at the desk at either end of the building. The therapists are busy with multiple responsibilities before and after the group session, so please abide by the following rules. If you arrive early, please wait in one of the waiting room or on the benches in the hall with your child. Your therapist will open the door when she is ready to receive children. Parents should arrive for pick-up at least 5-10 minutes before dismissal. **A late fee will be assessed and must be paid before leaving if you are late picking up your child.**

AUTHORIZED PICK-UP PERSONS

We will keep on file the list of persons authorized to pick up your child, as included in the enrollment packet. A note from the parent or guardian is required if someone new will be picking the child up from therapy. We will need to see some form of identification from that person, such as a Picture ID.

SAFETY

The parking lot is large so please keep your children safe by **always holding their hands in the parking lot.** The facility is monitored 24 hours a day by interior and exterior cameras. The LSU police monitor our campus and are available to provide assistance.

WAITING AREAS

The atriums serve as waiting areas, so please be respectful of those around you. Complete all phone calls prior to entering the waiting area and take any incoming calls outside. Food and drink should be consumed before entering the building. You are welcome to use the outside picnic tables or the cafeteria if it is not in use by children but NO food or drink is allowed in any other area of the building. Please monitor the behavior of your children: climbing, jumping, and running are not allowed. Clean up any toys or books used before you leave.

PARENT RESOURCE ROOM

The Parent Resource Room is a quiet zone available for reading, research, and quiet play. This is not a playroom. Laptops are available for checkout at the front desk, with free WiFi accessible for research purposes.

PLAYGROUND POLICY

The playground is designed for therapeutic use and is accessible to you **only** when a staff member is present on the playground. You are welcome to take your other children outside when the playground is in use and staff is present, but non-enrolled children must be accompanied and supervised at all times by a responsible adult. If your presence interferes in your child's therapy, we ask that you remain inside.

OBSERVATION ROOMS

You may schedule an observation of your child's therapy session by contacting Meg Sprunger msprunger@emergela.org or Jane Morton jmorton@emergela.org

PARENT CONFERENCES

Regular scheduled conferences occur in the fall semester and spring (or summer) semester. It is important for you to make every effort to attend conferences with your child's therapist concerning your child's progress. This is an opportunity to ask questions, change a treatment plan, develop a home program, and evaluate your child's progress. Parents/therapists can request an additional conference at any time.

CLASSROOM AIDES

All aides are screened, interviewed, and undergo background checks prior to working within the program. Their role is to assist the therapists. They assist with the daily classroom needs and interact with the children under the supervision of the therapists and coordinators. Our aides are university students studying communication disorders, psychology, education, or related fields and are working to gain clinical experience in our classrooms. The student workers are active in carrying out the therapist's plans and

providing more individual attention to the children. They are a great asset to our program, however, they are unable to answer any questions regarding your child's program, progress, or performance. Please direct all questions about your child's progress to your therapist.

In addition, the Emerge Center may have a certified and licensed Speech-Language Pathology Assistant on staff. The SLP Assistant is qualified to substitute for the attending therapist during short-term absences or vacations.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH, MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT

As a non-profit center, Emerge relies on the support of local businesses and individuals for a portion of our funding. To give these donors and community stakeholders an understanding of the work we do, individuals and groups are toured through the center from time to time. In these instances, we keep your child's privacy as our highest priority, and we make every effort not to disrupt the services he/she receives. Likewise, in order to raise awareness and funds for our programs, Emerge may take photos or video footage for marketing purposes. To facilitate this, we reference the Photo/Video Release form you complete as part of your Enrollment Packet, so please be sure to keep those forms up to date with your therapist.

Get involved with the Emerge Center!

- Sign up for the parent email list! <http://www.emergela.org/client-information>
- Become a fan on Facebook & post your favorite Emerge story – <http://www.facebook.com/emergela>
- Follow us on Twitter & check people we're following for resources – <http://www.twitter.com/emergela>
- Check out photos in the life of our Center – <http://www.instagram.com/emergectrla>
- Watch videos about our services and share the link with friends – <http://www.youtube.com/emergela>
- Ask your child's therapist about needs in the classroom.
- Email Jessica at JLanglois@emergela.org to talk about more opportunities around Emerge.

See the School Calendar for holiday and closing schedules.

- **Calendar is subject to change. The Emerge Center will notify parents if there is a change in schedule.**
- **Calendar is also available on our website www.emergela.org**



Parent Handbook

I _____ have read and received a copy of the Emerge Center Child Development Center Parent Handbook.

Client Name

Parent/ Legal Guardian Signature

Date