



for communication, behavior, and development

Parent Handbook

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www.emergela.org



CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Children's Development Center 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.

GROUP SPEECH THERAPY:

The core 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 a licensed speech-language pathologists.

Group times and days are variable. Groups range from 1-hour to 2-hours in length and typically meet 2 times per week. Placement decisions are made by the professional staff, parent input and the needs of the child. The number of children per group varies but is kept purposefully low (typical enrollment is 6 children per group). Each group also has 1-2 "techs" (adult helpers) 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 and psychological services.

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.

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

ABA sessions are supervised by a licensed behavior analyst. Sessions are conducted by a certified technician and each session targets language, social, and self-help skills. Skills are carried over in individual and group settings.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational Therapy addresses sensory, fine motor, visual motor, self-help 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.

BLOOM PROGRAM

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

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).

PEDIATRIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

A variety of assessment and treatment options are available for children and adolescents through the Emerge Behavioral Health Department. The following services are offered with our team of Licensed Psychologists:

- Diagnostic evaluations for autism and related disorders for children under the ages of 6.
- Behavioral therapy for children and adolescents through the age of 18. Common referral problems include not following directions, tantrums, aggression, self-injurious behavior, disruptive behaviors, problems at school, and social skills.
- Parent training series targeting increasing caregiver knowledge about basic principles of behavior management along with hands on practice and modeling of recommended techniques.
- Feeding therapy for children with significant food selectivity and problem behaviors associated with trying new foods.

To request any of the services listed above, please call the Behavioral Health Department at 225-343-4232, extension 6903. Please specify the reason for the referral: evaluation, behavioral therapy, feeding therapy, and/ or parent training.

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 included in the CDC Enrollment Packet.

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 assigned to your child.

ATTENDANCE

The purpose of the attendance policy is to optimize progress toward your child's therapy goals. The amount of time that clients are present for therapy directly impacts their success. Late arrival and frequent absences are disruptive to the client and peers and can impede progress towards clinical goals.

When your child is unable to attend a scheduled therapy session, please **call to cancel**. Any child who has **3 consecutive no shows (absences without cancelling) may be removed from the roster immediately.**

When your child's attendance in a therapeutic service drops below 75% in one month, you will receive a written notification of attendance issues. If attendance continues to be inconsistent, dropping below 75%, your child will be discharged from therapy services at Emerge.

To avoid this situation, we ask you to keep an open line of communication with your child's therapist(s). Please notify us of planned absences in advance. If your child is sick, please call or email to cancel the session. Excused absences include medical procedures, illness, and planned vacations. However, even excused absences which are excessive may result in a suspension of services until such time that your child is better able to benefit from therapeutic services at the Emerge Center.

DROP OFF AND PICK-UP

Please follow all instructions for carpool, so that we can move the children in and out of the building in an efficient way. Be sure to get in line for pick-up 10-15 minutes prior to the end time of your child's group therapy session (or 5 minutes before the end of an individual session). Emerge staff is unable to buckle your child's car seat, so you will need to do this yourself on pick-up.

If there are reasons why timely arrival or pick-up is difficult, please discuss this with your child's therapist to see if modifications can be made. **Persistent lateness may be grounds for dismissal from the Emerge therapy program.**

TARDY POLICY

It is important that your child is on time for therapy and that you are on time picking your child up from therapy. Every minute of a therapeutic session is important in order to maximize the benefit of early intervention services. Please be respectful of your therapist's time and plan to be on time arriving to therapy sessions and plan to be in line waiting when your child is dismissed from therapy.

Please call to let us know if you are going to be late for your scheduled therapy appointment. If you are more than 15 minutes late, we may need to cancel your child's session for that day.

When picking up your child, you are considered late if you arrive more than 5 minutes past your scheduled pick-up time. **A late fee will be assessed.** The late fee is \$15 for the first 6-10 minutes, and an additional \$1 per minute for any time beyond that.

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 **staying close as they enter the car and 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.

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.

RESEARCH

Part of the goal of the Emerge Center is to contribute to and participate in scientific research to better the lives of our clients and their families. You will have the opportunity to have your name and contact information added to the Emerge Center Research Database. The Research Database is confidential and only used to contact qualifying families when a new research study is recruiting participants. Research projects may be run internally through the Emerge Center or in conjunction with an outside group such as LSU. Your child's participation in any research study is voluntary and does not impact your child's access to therapy in any way. You may withdraw from the Emerge Research Database at any time by contacting the Director of Research and Design, Jane Morton, PhD, BCBA-D.

PHOTOGRAPHS & SOCIAL MEDIA

While social networking is fun and valuable, there are some risks we need to keep in mind when using these tools. When taking photos of your child during events at Emerge, please remember to photograph only your child to respect the privacy and confidentiality of others.

Please refrain from taking photos or videos of:

- Other children
- Families and other visitors
- Emerge Center staff members and other providers, unless you have their permission
- Discussions
- Treatments and procedures

EMERGENCY AND WEATHER RELATED PROBLEMS

In the event of an emergency or inclement weather, you will be notified via our Constant Contact System and Facebook page as to the closure and the re-opening of the center.

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 (100.4 or higher)
- Symptoms of any communicable disease (Note: Please notify the Program Director of any communicable disease your child has such as West Nile Virus, 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 Center. Written permission to return must be obtained from your doctor if your child has been diagnosed with a highly communicable disease, directly exposed to COVID-19, OR if your child been admitted to a medical facility for an outpatient procedure or hospitalization.

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.

If your child needs sunscreen, bug spray, or diaper cream, please apply these prior to dropping off your child for therapy.

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. 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.

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, sandals, crocks, flip flops, etc.

BACKPACKS

Your child will need a backpack, preferably the kind that zips or snaps at the top, just big enough to hold a change of clothes and any diapers or pullups that your child may need. This gives your child the independence to handle their own backpack. **Please check your child's backpack daily** for important papers and notes from your therapists.

OBSERVATION ROOMS

You may schedule an observation of your child's group speech therapy session by contacting Meg Sprunger msprunger@emergela.org.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH, MARKETING AND FUNDRAISING

As a non-profit, mission-driven organization, The Emerge Center relies on community support to continuously strengthen our capacity to serve the children and families in our care. To give our 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!

- 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 supply needs in the classroom.
- Host a fundraiser. No event is too big or small! Every dollar counts. Fundraising ideas include cook-offs, lemonade stands or cupcake sales. Need ideas or support? Contact Shelton Jones, Executive Director of The Emerge Foundation, at sjones@emergela.org.
- Consider making a donation via [emergela.org](http://www.emergela.org).

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