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**PARENT HANDBOOK**

***January 25, 2025***

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# Welcome

Dear Villagers,

Welcome to Little Learners Prep Academy! I say ‘villager’ in the aspect that “it takes a village to raise a child.” We are excited to partner with you, as part of your ‘village,’ in the care and guidance of your child. Our goal of working together furthers the growth and development of your child so he/she can reach their fullest potential. To achieve this, we strive to operate within a subset of ideals that we call “Live, Laugh, Love, Learn.” Why do we do this? Children thrive in multi-disciplinary environments. They need structure and freedom, at the same time, in order to feel safe to explore and learn. Most emotional, cognitive, physical, and psychological milestones come from their experiences with caregivers as well as their surroundings. Basically, they take what they learn from their “village” and apply that to life as they grow. Our ideals ensure that your child will have a multitude of well-rounded experiences derived from our four tenants:

1. LIVE: Life is precious — every person has the right to live life to the fullest.
2. LAUGH: A fun program — children use play as building blocks that are central to the development of literacy and social skills.
3. LOVE: A warm, loving environment — feeling safe and nurtured in a home-away-from home environment allows for exploration and growth.
4. LEARN: A learning environment with appropriate curriculum and interactive experiences— children develop cognitive capacities through learning experiences.

We appreciate your trust in us and promise to partner with each family to ensure that your little one(s) flourish at Little Learners Prep Academy. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our administration.

With Warmest Welcome,



Wendy McPherson

Owner

This handbook contains information regarding our program. It is very important that you read this handbook in its entirety and keep it handy as long as your child is enrolled in our program. It will answer many of the questions you have about our center.

# Mission Statement

Our mission statement is threefold. First and foremost, for children we will provide a caring, learning-enriched, unique environment away from home. For our employees we will provide a stable yet challenging and rewarding work environment. For the city of Hilliard and its surrounding suburbs, we will provide jobs and economic opportunities plus a vibrant learning atmosphere for the children of its families.

# Distinguishing Characteristics

We intend to address the needs of parents who seek quality, learning-enriched, caring services for their children. We will address this need by creating an exciting, structured, and interactive learning environment. Distinguishing characteristics of our center will be:

* Developmentally appropriate activities
* Safe and nurturing atmosphere
* Community involvement
* Philanthropic endeavors
* Structured daily schedules
* Nutritious meals and snacks
* Exciting and educational field trips
* Organized, professional management
* Responsible and educated staff

# Philosophy and Goals

Little Learners Prep Academy was established to provide quality care for children ages six weeks through eleven years of age.

We believe…

In a warm and caring atmosphere.

In high standards and a motivated staff.

In the dignity and worth of each individual.

In encouraging children to make choices.

In giving back to the community.

In whole-child learning: social, emotional, physical, and cognitive.

Our goals…

To foster integrity, compassion, and respect.

To inspire creativity and achievement.

To promote lifelong learning in a safe and caring environment.

To grow and evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of our community’s families.

Children are encouraged to explore their environment and think creatively. Teachers guide and enhance this process through materials and activities using lesson plans that are developed by staff denoting weekly themes and units of study. Discovery Centers are arranged to offer challenging play, exploration, and success at a range of developmental levels. We are committed to providing a stimulating child-oriented environment which is clean, healthy, and safe.

We are committed to supporting our teachers with specific and appropriate training experiences. We provide opportunities for staff to share ideas and grow professionally through continuing education. Staff is required to have annual training in a childcare related field. Our staff is CPR and First Aid certified.

We are committed to developing and maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust between parents and staff. The Site Director is available for parents to discuss any aspect of Little Learners Prep Academy program.

# License

At the end of this handbook, you will find an attachment about licensing and other valuable information. Please take the time to read this information.

# Admissions

A child is considered to be enrolled in the center only after the registration fee has been paid, the Site Director confirms the availability of space, and the required Enrollment and Health Information form is complete. For the safety of your child, any change to the information provided by the parents must be communicated to the office immediately so that current information is always on file. A medical form signed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner is required to be submitted within thirty days of admission. This medical form must be updated every thirteen months.

# Program Hours

The operating hours for Little Learners Prep Academy will be from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. A late fee of $10 plus $3 for every minute will be charged to parents of children who are picked up after 6:00 p.m. A child may not be left at the center before 6:30 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. Other events may be scheduled outside of operating hours requiring the center to be open. Should this occur, it should not be assumed that these events will entail childcare.

***Holidays & Service Days:*** Little Learners Prep Academy will be closed in observance of the following holidays & service days:

* New Year’s Day
* Memorial Day
* July 4th
* Labor Day
* Thanksgiving
* Day After Thanksgiving
* Christmas Day
* Annual Cleaning Day

In the event the holiday falls on a Saturday, the center will be closed on the Friday before, and if it falls on a Sunday, we will be closed on the Monday after. Little Learners will close at noon on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve. Holidays and service days are still considered paid tuition days as the staff are given them as paid holidays or are being paid to work on service days.

***Inclement Weather Policy:*** In the event of bad weather and possible school closing, please listen to local news stations. Little Learners will make every attempt to remain open during snow days. If driving conditions should become hazardous during center hours, parents are urged to pick up children as soon as possible.

# Program Ratios

At Little Learners Prep Academy, we approach childcare and learning utilizing classroom protocol. We will not exceed teacher to student ratios as set forth by state guidelines. Those guidelines specify the following ratios:

* Infants (birth to 12 months): 1:5 or 2:12
* Older Infants (12 months to 18 months): 1:6 or 2:12
* Young Toddlers (18 months to 30 months): 1:7
* Older Toddlers (30 months to 36 months): 1:8
* Young Preschoolers (3 years to 4 years): 1:16
* Older Preschoolers (4 years until eligible for kindergarten): 1:18
* School-agers (eligible for school): 1:30

Because we desire to provide a higher level of care, we will strive to maintain lower ratios. Ratios for toddlers and preschoolers may be doubled for 1 ½ hours at naptime as long as all children are resting quietly on their cots and enough staff are in the building to meet the regular required staff/child ratio if there is an emergency. The maximum group sizes are as follows:

* 12 Young Infants
* 12 Older Infants
* 14 Young Toddlers
* 16 Older Toddlers
* 32 Young Preschoolers
* 36 Older Preschoolers
* 60 School-agers

Maximum group size is defined by the number of children in one group that may be cared for at any time. Limitations do not include naptime, lunchtime, outdoor play, or special activities.

# Daily Schedules

At Little Learners, we have developed daily schedules for each classroom based on age-appropriate themes and activities. Developmentally appropriate toys are always available for free play. Each week a new curriculum plan is posted so that you know what your child is experiencing. A regular routine provides security for the children and helps them develop self-discipline. Slight variations may be made due to weather, special activities (such as parties, special visitors, etc.) and the mood of the children. Diapered children will be checked every two hours, or sooner if deemed necessary.

**Infant Daily Schedule (SAMPLE)**

6:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. ***Welcome!***

Arrive and settle in; morning bottles and meals; play based on

planned activities and experiences; diapers and naps as needed

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ***Morning Routines***

Explore the environment with teachers; play based on planned activities and experiences; bottles and meals; diapers and naps as needed

12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. ***Up and About!***

Enjoy time playing; large muscle movement with music; bottles and meals; diapers and naps as needed

3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. ***Afternoon Routines***

Explore the environment with teachers; play based on planned activities and experiences; bottles and meals; diapers and naps as needed

5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. ***Transition and Departure***

**Wobbler Daily Schedule (SAMPLE)**

6:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Arrival/Free Play

8:00 a.m. – 8:20 a.m. Breakfast

8:20 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Phonics/Circle Time/Diapers

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Media Center/Gross Motor Play

10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Lunch Prep/Lunch

11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Nap Prep/Diapers

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. Nap

1:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Wake Up/Diapers/Theme Art

2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Snack

2:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Media Center/Gross Motor Play

2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Diapers/Teacher’s Choice

4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Academic Time/Math

4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Books & Puzzles

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Diapers/Free Play/Departure

**Toddler I Daily Schedule (SAMPLE)**

6:30 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. Arrival/Free Play

8:15 a.m. – 8:35 a.m. Breakfast

8:35 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Free Play/Diapers

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Circle Time/Phonics

9:30 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. Theme Art

10:25 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Gross Motor Play

10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Media Center/Lunch Prep

11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Lunch

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Nap Prep

12:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Nap Time

1:45 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Wake Up/Diapers

2:15 p.m. – 2:35 p.m. Snack

2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Gross Motor Play/Media Center

3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Academic Time/Math

3:45 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Tents/Diapers

4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Dancing/Free Play

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Books/Puzzles/Departure

**Toddler II Daily Schedule (SAMPLE)**

6:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Arrival/Free Play

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Circle Time

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Academic Time

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Potty Break

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Gross Motor Play

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Arts & Crafts

11:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Lunch Prep

11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Lunch

12:15 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. Potty Break

12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Nap

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Potty Break

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Individual Book Time

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Snack

3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. Free Play

4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Potty Break

4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Puzzles/Books/Music

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Media Center/Departure

**Preschool I Daily Schedule (SAMPLE)**

6:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Arrival/Free Play

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Cleanup

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Breakfast

9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Circle Time/Story Time

9:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Academic Instruction (Language Arts, Math, Themed

Learning Activities, Individualized Instruction)

11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Gross Motor Play

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Lunch Prep

12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch

12:30 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. Rest Time Prep

12:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Rest Time

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Wake Up/Bathroom/Book Time

2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Snack

3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Gross Motor Play

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Media Center/Free Play/Individualized Instruction

5:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. Cleanup

5:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Dance Time/Departure

**Preschool II Daily Schedule (SAMPLE)**

6:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Arrival/Free Play

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Cleanup

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Breakfast

9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Circle Time/Story Time

9:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Academic Instruction (Language Arts, Math, Themed

Learning Activities, Individualized Instruction)

11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Gross Motor Play

11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch Prep/Lunch

12:30 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. Rest Time Prep

12:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Rest Time

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Wake Up/Bathroom/Book Time

2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Snack Prep/Snack

3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Gross Motor Play

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Media Center/Free Play/Individualized Instruction

5:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. Cleanup

5:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Dance Time/Departure

**Kindergarten/School Age Daily Schedule (SAMPLE)**

6:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Drop off/Free Play

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Breakfast

9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Circle Time/Academic Time

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Centers and Free Time

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Art Projects/Free Art

11:30 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. Lunch Prep/Lunch

12:05 p.m. – 12:15 p.m. Prepare for Kindergarten Bus

12:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Kindergarten

4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Snack Prep/Snack

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Free Play/Games/Departure

***Naps and Rest Time:*** Nap and rest time for children is extremely important. All children under five must nap and will be provided their own designated cot or crib for this purpose. Older children must have a rest period during this time and will be supplied with reading materials and quiet activities.

# Tuition and Payment Policies

All tuition fees are due on the Monday morning of each week prior to services rendered. If tuition is not received upon arrival Monday morning, your child will not be authorized to attend. Parents may pay tuition in advance for the following week(s). If your child is absent on Monday, tuition is due the morning of his/her first day back. Little Learners reserves the right to raise fees should it become necessary to do so. Please see the attached addendum listing our current tuition rates.

***Payment:*** Forms of payment that are accepted at Little Learners are cash, checks or money orders. Please write your child’s name on all payments. All checks should be made payable to Little Learners Prep Academy and should be placed in the payment box. Tuition payment may also be provided via our operating software. Please inquire with administration regarding options. Our tax ID number is available upon request.

***Delinquent Accounts and Returned Checks:*** If tuition falls behind, you will be asked to clear your account, or your child will not be able to attend. In addition, a late fee of $5 per day will be assessed until the tuition is paid. Little Learners will not accept any child that has a balance on their account and has the right to terminate care without notice. Insufficient funds checks will be charged an additional fee of $30. After two NSF checks, you will be placed on a cash-only basis for payment.

***Registration Fee:*** A non-refundable annual fee of $75 for an individual child or $130 for a family is required upon registration.

***Deposit:*** A two-week tuition deposit is required for each child. This deposit is refunded when your child leaves Little Learners, provided you give two weeks’ notice of disenrollment from the program. Any late pick-up fees, NSF fees, non-paid tuition, or miscellaneous balances due will be deducted from your deposit. If there is a remaining balance, you will be issued a check approximately two weeks after your child’s departure.

***Multiple Child Discount:*** Little Learners will extend a courtesy discount for families with multiple children attending our program. The discount will be 4% off the current lowest tuition rate for the additional child. This discount applies only to tuition and not to the registration fees, deposits or miscellaneous program fees and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers or discounts.

***Late Charges:*** A late fee of $10 plus $3 for every minute will be charged to parents of children who are picked up after 6 p.m. The charge will be noted in the sign-in and will be expected in-full upon arrival. At 6:30 p.m., if a parent or emergency contact has not been found, the Hilliard Police Department will be contacted for assistance. The classroom teachers are only scheduled to work until 6 p.m. therefore, in the event a child is repeatedly picked up after 6 p.m., it is grounds for disenrollment. The center clock is the time that is logged at arrival and departure and the staff will document on the sign-in and sign-out if your written time differs from the facility clock.

***Vacations, Holidays and Inclement Weather:*** Full tuition is due for any periods of time that the child does not attend the center, such as vacations, illness, or holidays. Full payment is also expected for days that Little Learners is closed due to inclement weather, as staff is still paid for these days. Little Learners will extend a courtesy discount for two weeks of vacation per family each year at half the tuition rate per child.

***Illness:*** In the event of illness, full payment is expected, except for an extended illness. An extended illness is an illness that keeps the child out of the center for more than five consecutive weekdays. A physician’s note will be required as proof of the extended illness. Half payment is required for extended illnesses to maintain the child’s enrollment.

***Withdrawals:*** Enrolled students must be functional in a group setting. If the center has exhausted all means of accommodating a child, it may be necessary in some instances to disenroll a child. In such an event, the two-week deposit is non-refundable. Should a parent decide to withdraw a child voluntarily, a two-week written notice is required. Also, your account must be current and paid in full at the time of withdrawal. In the event that a two-week notice is not given, parents will still be charged and required to pay for two weeks of tuition. Families that wish to alter attendance during the summer, will have a variety of Summer Attendance Plans to choose from. Each involves a set number of days with a corresponding tuition. Signing up for one of the Summer Attendance Plans assures the child’s space for fall and beyond. You may withdraw your child but, this option will require the process of reenrollment when you wish to resume care. If a child is voluntarily withdrawn and the parent would like to re-enroll the child, the child must be put at the bottom of the waiting list and a new enrollment fee must be paid. Spaces will not be held for children who are dropped for the summer and wish to re-enroll for the fall. If you have withdrawn your child or your child has been disenrolled from the program, all prior balances must be paid in full before you can again be enrolled. This includes balances due to bankruptcy.

# Supervision Policy

***Sign In/Sign Out:*** Little Learners requires that parents sign/log-in their children upon entrance and escort the child to their classroom. Please sign in/out legibly, with your full name, and indicate the time as dictated by the clock in the lobby or on the sign-in device. We only honor the time indicated by the facility time due to the many variations of each person’s watch/clock who attends. Any special messages, medications and the like should be discussed with the teacher at this time. Children may not be dropped off in any portion of the building or grounds other than their designated classroom or be left unattended. When a child is leaving, parents are required to inform the appropriate staff that the child will be going home. They must also sign/log the child out. No child shall be left unsupervised.

***Arrival:*** Children should arrive at the center fully dressed and ready to participate in the day’s events. To determine what the daily schedule is and what activities are planned for the week, parents need to check the lesson plan posted outside each classroom. Parents with infants are required to fill in or have prepared their Infant Daily Information Sheet so that appropriate care is provided according to the child’s needs for the day. Parents must notify the center if their child will arrive after 8 a.m. so that the center may include them in the lunch count for the cafeteria or you will be responsible for providing a lunch for your child.

***Departure:*** Parents are expected to arrive in time to gather all of their child's possessions that will be going home with them and leave the center by 6 p.m. If parents wish to stay and observe, chat with other parents, etc., they should allow extra time before closing time. This policy allows caregivers to prepare the rooms and leave the center on time. Any arrangements other than those stated above must be authorized by the Site Director with only emergencies and extreme hardship taken into consideration.

***Release of a Child:*** Your child will only be released from the center to legal guardians. If you need someone else to pick up your child, they must be listed on your registration form. In addition, you will need to inform the Site Director of this change. The Site Director and/or Teacher will verify that person by checking a valid photo I.D., such as a state driver’s license or state photo I.D. If someone other than the designated persons will be picking up your child, we must receive advance notice, or your child will not be released. Notification will consist of the person’s full name, address, telephone number, relationship to the child and other pertinent information that will help us identify the person. Little Learners will require picture identification and other proof of identification from that person before releasing your child. Parents will be notified immediately if someone not on the list comes to pick up their child. Staff will not release children to anyone, including parents, who appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In this circumstance, emergency contacts will be called to transport the child home and police will be notified if necessary.

***Custody Agreements:*** If there are custody issues involved with your child, you must provide Little Learners with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. The center may not deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation.

***Supervision of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers:*** At no time will a child be left unattended. Staff will supervise children at all times, including naptime. If a child becomes ill, they may be isolated in a section of the room not in use, but within sight and hearing of a staff member.

***Supervision of School Age Children:*** School age children may run errands inside the building or use the restroom alone or in groups of no more than six children without adult supervision as long as the following conditions are met: Children are within hearing distance of a their teacher, the teacher checks on the children regularly until they return and the restroom they use is for the exclusive use of the center. One group of no more than six school children, fourth grade age or older, may engage in activities which pose no physical risk to their safety in a room without a childcare staff member as long as the teacher can see or hear the children at all times and checks on the children every five minutes.

***Children Arriving from Other Programs:*** At times it may be necessary for a child to arrive at Little Learners from another program (Example: Child arrives after a part-time school day, or a school-ager arrives at the center after school). If a child is scheduled to arrive and does not, we will first contact the parent to confirm that the child is scheduled to be at the center that day and then contact the program that they are to have arrived from. We will then consult with the parent to determine further action. For this reason, it is very important that parents contact Little Learners when their child will not be attending.

***School Delays and Cancellations:*** Little Learners will operate a full day program for school-agers when school is closed for vacations, delays, or cancellations, unless severe weather prevents us from doing so.

***Absences:*** Any time a child will be absent, parents are asked to please notify the center as soon as possible. Contact the Site Director when the child has an illness so that other parents can be notified if necessary. Advance notice when your child is absent allows the staff to better plan for the day. The full amount of weekly fees will be charged regardless of absence.

***Transitioning:*** You will be notified when your child is ready to move up to the next classroom. As part of the procedure, center staff will develop a transition plan. This plan will include the beginning and ending date of the transitioning period and include a transition schedule. The plan will be signed by the parent. Parents may also request to have their child transitioned. These requests will be accommodated if it is in the best interest of the child and space is available in the next room.

For new students entering our Center, great care and attention will be paid to ease your child into classroom routines. With the Family Information Form provided in the Enrollment Packet, your child’s teacher will have information as to your child’s personality and preferences, which will help ensure a smooth transition.

For students leaving our Center, we will ensure your child understands the changes to come. A “bon-voyage” party may be celebrated with your child’s class to help ease this departure. At the request of parents, your child’s file can be transferred to the facility of your choice.

***Child Abuse Reporting:*** All staff members are mandated reporters of child abuse. If staff have suspicions that a child is being abused or neglected, they must make a report to the local children’s services agency. The safety of the children is always our first concern.

# Transportation

Should your school age child require transportation to and from school, parents must complete a Transportation Permission Form. Little Learners will then work with the Hilliard City School District Transportation Department to see if they can accommodate your request. If this is not possible, the center will attempt to accommodate the transportation need using the Little Learners bus if the center’s transportation schedule permits. A Routine Trip Permission form must be completed in order for the center to provide routine school transportation. Students being transported will be signed in when they board the bus and signed out upon leaving the bus. The driver will walk the bus at the beginning of each trip in order to count the number of passengers and ascertain that all passengers have left the bus at the end of the trip. A staff member with first aid, communicable disease and CPR training will be present for any type of transportation.

***Field Trips:*** Field trips are a planned part of Little Learners curriculum. Parents will be

given prior notice of these trips so they can ensure their child has the appropriate clothing and/or supplies for the day. Field Trip Permission forms must be completed, signed, dated, and returned one day prior to the trip. Children whose form is not returned will not take part in the outing. Admission fees for some outings are the responsibility of the parent. Before departing the center, a count will be taken of all the children, and they will be marked on a separate attendance sheet specifically created for the trip. Upon arrival at the destination, another count will be taken to ensure that all the children have safely arrived. This process will be repeated upon leaving the destination as well as upon returning to the center. During field trips, each staff member will have specific children that they are responsible for supervising.

***Emergencies:*** Little Learners will not transport children in emergency situations. If a child requires transportation, the parent or the emergency squad will be contacted.

***Swimming:*** Little Learners may include water play activities during the summer. These would include sprinklers and small wading pools (less than 6 inches deep). Parents will also be asked to sign written permission slips prior to children engaging in water play with standing water. Please remember to send bathing suits, towels, and sunscreen for your children. A medication form for the use of sunscreen must also be completed. If your child burns easily, please include a lightweight T-shirt that they may wear over their swimsuit.

# Behavior Management

Behavior management at Little Learners will be individualized and consistent for each child. It shall be appropriate to each child’s level of understanding and be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. All persons at our center will adhere to the specifications in Rule 5101:2-12-19 of the licensing guidelines. This guidance management policy applies to all employees.

* Physical punishment shall not be administered to children.
* Staff shall not shame, humiliate, frighten, physically or mentally harm children or label them negatively.
* Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest or illness.
* The length of time a child is placed in time-out shall not exceed one minute per year of the child’s age.

It is the philosophy of Little Learners Prep Academy to provide positive discipline to children. Learning to express emotions verbally and honestly is a normal part of childhood. Staff will help by modeling appropriate behavior and by teaching an acceptable vocabulary to express anger, annoyance, sadness, etc. Staff must keep their eyes and ears open to possible discipline problems that can be avoided, and we must always listen to what children have to say. These are suggestions to be used by the staff:

* Redirection: Suggest appropriate behavior during a quiet, private talk. Show respect for the child’s feelings by getting down to the child’s level and giving the child your complete attention. Be direct and brief.
* Direct praise: Praise the child that is behaving appropriately. Catch the child being good and comment on that to the child. Avoid always catching the child engaging in inappropriate behavior.
* Indirect praise: Praise a child who is behaving the way you want the rest of the group to behave.
* Role Model: The staff should always be a role model for children. Staff should also display role model behaviors such as using a whisper voice when they want children to be quieter.
* Privilege Removal: When children are damaging things, using equipment in an unsafe manner or fighting over toys, etc., the privilege to use the equipment will be taken away from the child.
* Break: For acts of physical aggression or other serious offenses, a “break” or supervised separation from the group is appropriate. Staff will give forewarning, then follow through in a firm, fair and friendly manner with the action announced. When the child is calm enough to listen, the reason for break will be explained. Staff will listen to the child tell how they felt, why they did what they did, and the teacher will tell how she/he felt about the situation. It is very important that we take time to listen to the child’s side of the story.
* Parental Support: Should behavioral problems exist with a child who is not responding to the above forms of behavior management, we will enlist the help and support of the parents. A child learns best when the guidance is consistent both at home and at Little Learners Prep Academy.

These are Little Learners Prep Academy rules for children:

* We listen to each other.
* We stop and think before acting or saying.
* Our hands are for helping, not hurting.
* We ask, “Do I want to make a good choice or a bad choice?”
* We care about each other’s feelings.
* We are responsible for what we say and do.
* We give ourselves a pat on the back and say, “Good job!”

These are the consequences for children abusing the rules:

* Redirection: The child will be redirected to another activity that is appropriate.
* Verbal Warning: This reminds the child of the rule broken. The key is to learn from the mistake.
* Time-out: This allows the child to think about what he/she did wrong and what to do in the future so as not to make the same mistake again.
* Speaking to Parent: If a rule is continually broken, it will be documented, and the parent will be informed.
* Removed from Class: The child may be removed from the setting to allow the child to calm down.
* Suspension: In cases of severe or continuous behavior problems.
* Disenrollment: Continuous behavioral problems after suspension.

# Food Service

Little Learners provides a morning snack around 8:00 a.m., lunch between 11:15 a.m. and noon and an afternoon snack around 2:30 p.m. The Child Nutrition Program Meal Guidelines are followed at Little Learners. Lunches are constructed to provide one third of a child’s recommended daily dietary allowance. Menus are posted each week at the entrance.

Morning snack is served from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. If your child will be arriving after 9:00 a.m., please have him/her eat breakfast before arriving. Children are not to bring outside food to the center except at designated mealtimes. If your child will be attending but will arrive after 8 a.m., parents are required to call to make sure that the child is added into the lunch count for the cafeteria. If the center is not called to include your child in the lunch count, then you will be responsible for providing your child a lunch for that day.

***Allergies:*** Food/milk allergies must be communicated in detail using the ODJFS Medical/Physical Care Plan. (ODJFS 1236) In the case of a milk allergy, please have the doctor list a substitute item that can be served instead. Little Learners will make every attempt to offer appropriate substitutions to children with food allergies. However, if these attempts overly burden the staff and affect the normal food service routines, we will have no choice but to ask the parent to supply their child’s meals and snacks. **Note: Little Learners has adopted a nut-free policy. Please check with administration before bringing snacks or treats in for your child’s class.**

***Substitutions:*** We know that children can be picky eaters, therefore we have devised a menu that will appeal to most children while offering variety as well as meeting daily requirements. If your child refuses to eat the planned daily items, we will offer a standard substitution. Please refer to the weekly menu for these selections. If a child routinely refuses to eat what is on the menu, we will require the parent to supply their child’s meals and snacks.

***Fluid Milk Requirements for Children by Age:*** The licensed childcare center is to ensure that children are served fluid milk unless the parent provides written instructions by a licensed physician, physician's assistant (PA), advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) or certified nurse practitioner (CNP). Below is a list of age-appropriate fluid milk selections that meet the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) requirement for centers:

**Infants up to twelve months of age**

* Formula
* Breast Milk

**Infants and toddlers twelve months of age up to twenty-four months of age**

* Unflavored whole homogenized vitamin D fortified cow’s milk
* Breast milk at parent’s request, without written instructions from a licensed physician, PA or CNP
* Non-cow milk substitutions that are nutritionally equivalent to milk, with written parental consent

**Toddlers and children twenty-four months of age and older**

* Unflavored 1% milk that is vitamin A and D fortified
* Unflavored fat-free or skim milk that is vitamin A and D fortified
* Non-cow milk substitutions that are nutritionally equivalent to milk, with written parental consent

***Meal and Snack Requirements:***

**Center Hours of Operation:** **Meals and Snacks Available:**

4 to 8 hours per day One of the following:

• 1 meal and 1 snack

• 1 meal and breakfast

More than 8 hours and fewer One of the following:

than 14 hours per day • 1 meal and 2 snacks

• 1 meal and breakfast

• 1 meal and 1 snack

• 2 meals and 1 snack

More than 14 hours or overnight • breakfast, 2 meals and 2 snacks

After school for school children • 1 snack

The content of meals, snacks and breakfast is to be selected from the following four basic food groups:

* Meat or meat alternative
* Breads and grains
* Fruits and vegetables (juices may be used if 100% and undiluted)
* Fluid milk (see previous section)

***Meal, Snack and Breakfast Food Group Requirements:***

**Type of Feeding:** **Food Group:**

**Meal:** **All of the Following:**

(provide 1/3 of the recommended • 1 serving of fluid milk

daily dietary allowances as specified • 1 serving of meat or meat alternative

by the USDA) • 1 serving of fruit\*

• 1 serving of vegetables\*

• 1 serving of bread and grains

**Breakfast** 1 serving from 3 of the 4 food groups

**Snack** 1 serving from 2 of the 4 food groups

\*A vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruit requirement. When two vegetables are served at lunch, two different kinds of vegetables are to be served.

Written instructions must be obtained by a physician if Little Learners is asked to administer a medical food or eliminate an entire food group for a student. When special diets are required for cultural or religious reasons, parents must provide written, dated, and signed instructions.

# Accidents and Emergencies

Little Learners Prep Academy has devised several procedures to follow should an emergency occur while a child is in the center’s care.

***Evacuation:*** In the event of a fire or tornado, staff will follow the written instructions posted in each classroom describing emergency evacuation routes and the procedures to be followed to assure that children have arrived at the designated spot. To prepare children for the unlikely need to evacuate, the center does conduct monthly fire drills and periodic tornado drills. Should we need to evacuate due to fire or weather conditions or the loss of power, heat or water to the center, our emergency destination is the Verizon Corporate Center, 5000 Britton Parkway. If the immediate area must be evacuated, we will move to the Verizon building, 5000 Britton Parkway. A sign will be posted in front of the center indicating that we have evacuated and the location where you can pick up your child. Parents will also be contacted, as soon as possible, to come pick up your child. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts as listed on your child’s enrollment information. In the unlikely event there would be an environmental threat or a threat of violence, the staff will; secure the children in the safest location possible, contact and follow the directions given by the proper authorities, and contact the parents as soon as the situation allows. An incident report would also be provided to the parents.

***First Aid:*** There will always be at least one staff member present that has received training in First Aid, Communicable Diseases and CPR. In the case of a minor accident/injury, staff will administer basic first aid and TLC. If the injury/illness would be more serious, first aid would be administered, and the parents would be contacted immediately to assist in deciding an appropriate course of action. If any injury/illness is life threatening, the EMS will be contacted, parents will be notified, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. Staff may not transport children in their vehicles. Only parents or EMS will transport. It is Little Learners policy that each family grant permission, or enrollment will be refused.

***Incident/Injury Reports:*** An incident/injury report will be completed and given to the person picking up their child the day of the incident/injury if any of the following occur: the child has an illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid; the child receives a bump or blow to the head; the child has to be transported by emergency squad; or an unusual or unexpected event occurs which jeopardizes the safety of the child. If a child requires emergency transportation, the report shall be available within twenty-four hours after the incident occurs. The center shall also contact licensing personnel from the appropriate ODJFS office within twenty-four hours when there is a “general emergency” or “serious incident, injury or illness.” The report will be provided to licensing staff within three days of the incident.

# Health Policies

Little Learners Prep Academy provides children with a clean and healthy environment. However, we realize that children become ill from time to time. If this is your child’s first group care experience, it is possible that they may experience more frequent illnesses at the beginning before their immune system becomes more active. We observe all children as they enter the program to quickly assess their general health. We ask that you not bring a sick child to the center. They will be sent home! Please also plan ahead and have a backup care plan in place if you are not able to take time off from work or school. In addition, please call the Site Director early in the morning if your child will be absent.

***Symptoms of Illness:*** A child with any of the following symptoms will be immediately isolated and released to the parent or emergency contact:

* Temperature of 100.2 degrees Fahrenheit in combination with any other signs of illness
* Diarrhea (more than three abnormally loose stool within a twenty-four-hour period)
* Severe coughing (causing the child to become red in the face or to make a whooping sound)
* Difficult or rapid breathing
* Yellowish skin or eyes
* Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching
* Untreated skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
* Unusually dark urine or grey or white stools
* Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
* Evidence of untreated lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation
* Vomiting more than once or when accompanied by any other sign of illness
* Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

Any child demonstrating signs of illness not listed above will be isolated, carefully observed for symptoms and the parent will be notified. If a child does not feel well enough to participate in activities, the parent will be called to pick-up the child. Anytime a child is isolated they will be kept within sight and hearing of a staff member. The cot and any linens used will be washed and disinfected before being used again. Parents will be notified by a sign on the door if children have been exposed to a communicable illness. Children will be readmitted to the center after at least twenty-four hours of being free of fever and other symptoms. If they are not symptom-free, a doctor’s note will be required stating that the child is not contagious.

***Medications:*** The center will administer medications to a child only after the parent/physician completes a Request for Administration of Medication form. All proper sections must be completed, and the medication handed to the teacher each day. Medicine will always remain in a secured area. The only exception to this requirement is for school age children that require the immediate use of an inhaler for a medical condition. Only school-agers will be permitted to maintain control of their inhalers. Parents must sign a release form stating that they are permitting their child to always have access to the inhaler. The child must always keep the inhaler on his person as it may not be stored in a cubby or book bag. Anytime the child is unable to maintain control of the inhaler, it must be handed directly to the staff member responsible for the child.

Prescription medications must be in their original container and administered in accordance with instructions on the label. Over-the-counter medications must also be administered in accordance with label instructions. If parents request any different dosages or uses, a physician must provide written instructions on the Request for Administration of Medication Form. Over-the-counter medications will not be administered for more than three days without instructions from a physician. When medication is given to the child, the date, time, dosage, and staff members' signature are recorded on the medication form. A Request for Administration of Medication is generally not required for topical products, though a parent must provide written consent for use. Lip balm and hand sanitizer are exceptions.

***Immunizations:*** Up-to-date immunizations are required by Ohio Law and by the Ohio Department of Health for all children who attend a childcare facility. Immunizations not only protect your child, but also protect younger children in the center (who are not old enough for certain immunizations) from being exposed to a disease that your child could carry. A child will not be allowed to enter Little Learners without an immunization record that shows the child to be up-to-date or to be currently in the process of receiving immunizations due. After enrollment, when a child receives an immunization, the parent must bring the immunization record to the Site Director so that a copy can be made. Failure to obtain required immunizations as they are due is grounds for dismissal from the program.

***Injuries:*** Simple injuries will be cared for by the staff. A written incident report will be given to the parent explaining what happened. If a serious injury is involved, parents will be notified at once, and if necessary, the physician they have designated will be called or emergency service will be called. We must have the names and telephone numbers of other persons listed on file to contact in case the parent(s) cannot be reached. An unreported injury found by a teacher after the parent leaves will be recorded on a daily report form. The parent will be asked to sign the report at the end of the day. Parents are responsible for any expenses incurred due to an injury.

# Outdoor Play

Research has shown that children stay healthier when they have daily outdoor play. Based on this information and state requirements, outdoor play will be included in our program daily. We will limit the amount of time outside when the temperatures are very warm or very cold. Children will not be taken outside when the temperature (wind chill and heat index factored in) drops below 20 degrees or rises above 90 degrees. If the situation requires, we will also adjust outdoor time due to rain, threatening weather, ozone warnings, etc. Please do not request that your child stay inside. Little Learners does not have extra staff available to stay in with one child. On days that outdoor play is not provided due to these conditions, gross motor time will be included for all children in the Indoor Play Area or in the individual classrooms. Please send your children with the proper clothing so they may be comfortable and safe whenever we are outside. This includes snow pants, hats, mittens, and boots in the winter.

# Parent Participation

Little Learners Prep Academy welcomes parents to visit anytime during operating hours. Parents are also welcome to participate in field trips, class parties and any other special activity which occurs at the center. We feel it is essential that parents feel welcome and are aware of their child’s daily routine. Any custodial parent or guardian of a child enrolled at Little Learners shall be permitted access to the center during operating hours for the purpose of interacting with or observing their child. Parents are required to notify the Site Director of their presence. To maintain the daily structure for the children, it is required that you call ahead to make arrangements for your visit. Relatives and friends of children enrolled at the center will only be allowed entrance with a written permission note that is signed and dated by the child’s parent(s). Communication is vital for the well-being of the children, parents, and employees of Little Learners. We encourage everyone to offer advice, criticism, kudos or suggestions regarding the programs and employees of our center. If necessary, parents may schedule an appointment to meet with their child’s teacher if the need arises. Our staff fully realizes that you are entrusting us with your little ones, and we want our relationship to be a good one. If parents or employees have any concerns or questions at any time, it is recommended that the following chain of command be used until an answer or solution is found:

* Speak with your child’s Teacher
* Make an appointment with the Assistant Site Director
* Meet with the Site Director

Please check the bulletin boards and signs near the entrance door for general information which might be posted. Feel free to let the Site Director know if you are dissatisfied with any aspect of your relationship with Little Learners Prep Academy or if you have suggestions for improvement.

# Additional Policies

***Personal Supplies:*** Please refer to the attached lists provided in your enrollment packet.

Parents should check the child's cubby each day to see that supplies are adequate for the following day. Please label everything! With many different children and many staff members, this is a must. Notify the center immediately of any lost items.

***Breast feeding/Expressing:*** Parents are welcome to utilize the Employee Breakroom to breast feed or express breast milk. Depending on the parent’s comfort level, the Infant Room may be utilized as well.

***Assessments/Evaluations:*** Little Learners utilizes both a Developmental Checklist as well as the Ages & Stages Questionnaire to determine whether children are on an age-appropriate tract socially, emotionally, and cognitively. These assessments are meant as a resource for early intervention and are solely made available for the families. Our program does not report child level date to ODJFS or any other local or state agency.

***Items Brought From Home:*** Parents of children are asked not to allow a child to bring toys or other items from home as this causes confusion for the other children. Home toys also become mixed up with center toys and may be damaged. Do not allow your child to bring coins or other small items to the center, as they are easily swallowed by young children and can cause serious medical problems. Balloons are never allowed in the center. They are known to be potential chokers of children. If your child has a security item, please DO allow your child to bring it to Little Learners.

***ADA Compliance:*** Little Learners Prep Academy operates in compliance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Little Learners does not discriminate against persons with disabilities based on disability. Little Learners will administer necessary medications and provide necessary care procedures to enrolled students with disabilities.

**Ohio Department of Job and Family Services**

**CENTER PARENT INFORMATION**

The center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). This license is posted in a noticeable place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the center’s license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing rules

governing childcare are available for review at the center.

The administrator and each employee of the center is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the

local public children's services agency.

Any parent of a child enrolled in the center shall be permitted unlimited access to the center during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the center or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the

premises, the parent, or guardian shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

The administrator's hours of availability to meet with parents and child/staff ratios are

posted in a noticeable place in the center for review.

The licensing record, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, is available for review upon written request from the ODJFS. Inspections are also online at http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov/. Parents may search for a specific program and sign up to

be notified when the program's latest inspection is posted online.

It is unlawful for the center to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. To file a discrimination complaint, write or call Health and Human Services (HHS) or ODJFS. HHS and ODJFS

are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Write or Call: Write or Call:

HHS ODJFS

Region V, Office of Civil Rights Bureau of Civil Rights

233 N. Michigan Ave, Ste. 240 30 E. Broad St., 37th Floor

Chicago, IL 60601 Columbus, OH 43215-3414

(312) 886-2359 (voice) (614) 644-2703 (voice)

(312) 353-5693 (TDD) 1-866-277-6353 (toll free)

(312) 886-1807 (fax) (614) 752-6381 (fax)

1-866-221-6700 (TTY) or (614) 995-9961

For more information about childcare licensing requirements as well as how to apply for childcare assistance, Medicaid health screenings and early intervention services for your

child, please visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/families.stm>.

APPENDIX p(190234) pa(336369) d: (780811) ra(591411) print date: 10/13/2021 10:49 AM

# RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK

Parents,

After reading our handbook, please sign and return this page to the Site Director.

This acknowledges receipt and understanding of Little Learners Prep Academy policies and is to be turned in before your child attends our center. Please feel free to ask the Site Director questions about anything outlined in our handbook.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the parent handbook for Little Learners Prep Academy and have had the policies reviewed with me. I agree to follow all policies outlined within.

Signature of parent/guardian Date

Signature of parent/guardian Date