



PARENT HANDBOOK
Updated August 2023

LLA’s Mission and Vision: We at LLA commit to presenting children and families a friendly, safe, and fun learning atmosphere that offers a creative curriculum and choices for interactive play while encouraging individuality and socialization. We focus on the basics; nature, music, art, and free play and incorporate these into our daily routines.

Our staff will encourage and uplift children every step of the way while communicating with parents to offer the most positive early childhood education experience. We offer continuing education for our teachers to empower them to remain aware of children’s development and learning opportunities and best practices. We commit to finding, encouraging, and celebrating individuals while supporting collaborative classrooms as a whole.

We focus on learning through play. It is our foundation and commitment to make learning fun! We offer a nurturing environment where we model positive behaviors, encourage learning, and focus on positive development and growth. Our environment offers hands-on activities, age-appropriate curriculum, social-emotional development support and, of course, safe and trusting care of children.

LLA consists of a diverse, loving, and experienced team that creates a family atmosphere. Children are welcomed into a warm, safe, secure, and comfortable environment. At LLA, all children's needs are met with warm acceptance, compassion, kindness, and encouragement. As a team, we strive to develop a strong sense of individual worth and celebrate the uniqueness of each child and we are dedicated to practices honoring diversity, equity, and inclusion. This commitment is intended to value and celebrate individuality while creating a collaborative space for learning and acceptance.

Director’s Philosophy: We as parents, educators, and mentors must cultivate minds and inspire new and different ways of learning! There are endless possibilities in education, ongoing personal growth, and the motivation for meaningful change is focused on supporting young minds and, therefore, our communities for generations to come. This is my focus.

Effective leadership in education requires a strong ethical and moral commitment, careful consideration and analysis of research, and the ability to reflect, motivate, and inspire change. Effective leaders must possess an arsenal of skills not only to educate, but to support others in transforming meaningful learning. It is this learning that contributes to significant personal and professional growth. As an educator, I serve to advocate for the ECE industry and continually and without hesitation seek to uplevel the attention and support our industry deserves.

Curricula: LLA offers a fun and exciting hands-on, play-based curriculum in accordance with New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards and New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards. Our overarching basis for teaching is to lead learning through play, and our curricula and daily practices include a focus on social/emotional support. Our Blue, Green, Gold, and Purple Rooms will use the “Experience” curriculum in our lesson plans: the basis for this curriculum is allowing children to construct knowledge through everyday experiences This curriculum uniquely weaves 35 research-based skills into playful games and projects. As children participate, they naturally grow in all areas of development, including social-emotional, physical, language and cognitive development through integrated themes, disciplines, and domains.

We use the ECSElent Adventures Curriculum, a social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum that engages young children in various learning opportunities in our Red Room. These opportunities support children in learning how to identify, understand, express, and regulate emotions while developing empathy, prosocial, and problem-solving skills through skills through scenarios about family, cultural differences, social situations, and so much more. You will learn more specifics about your child’s lesson plans during Back to School Night held in October.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Communication between LLA and Families: Our teachers and staff love an open dialogue with our amazing LLA families! Miss Debbie and our LLA team feel this is crucial in our partnership, and we are always available when it comes to you and your child! LLA's communication channels are by phone at 856-559-0199, by email at littlelearningacademy@gmail.com, and using the Brightwheel App. You will receive an invitation to download the app via email; it is required for all LLA families and we use this app daily and often! We use the app not only for daily check-in and check-out; we also use the app to report on classroom updates or news, and also like to share fun photos throughout the day too! While teachers post periodically and are reachable, their primary attention is of course on the children and the classroom's daily happenings. For time-sensitive and important communications or concerns, and anything after 6 pm, please do not use the Brightwheel app, as teachers are not always looking at it. If it is after school hours and you need to speak to someone, please feel free to contact Miss Debbie on her cell phone at 856-905-2422. Brightwheel messages may not be replied to after school hours.

Registration Information and Requirements: Registration details, including family contacts, authorizations and more will be collected using Brightwheel. Email addresses, phone numbers, and authorized pick-up contacts MUST be accurate at all times – please inform us immediately of any changes to pertinent information. LLA follows all safety and licensing mandates for safe childcare centers. These mandates include having up-to-date records of your child's health screenings, including immunizations, and a Universal Health Record. **Universal Health Records are required each year** based on your child's exam date, not the date the form was provided.

Tuition, Vacations, and Special Discounts: For your convenience, LLA invoices monthly to make budgeting easy. In short, regardless of if there is a 4-week or a 5-week month, your invoicing stays the same. We also automatically allow and discount every student ONE FREE VACATION WEEK every year. Given these details, tuition is prorated across all weeks. Additionally, a 10% sibling discount is available and is given on lower amount of tuition for oldest child.

How did we determine the monthly rate?

- 52 weeks in a year, less 1 vacation week = 51 weeks
- Weekly tuition rate x 51 weeks = Annual tuition
- Annual tuition divided by 12, and presto, the monthly tuition rate.

Tuition Invoicing: Tuition is due monthly on the first day of the month or bi-monthly on the first and fifteenth days of the month. Tuition is due regardless of holidays, sick days, and planned or unplanned absences. Monthly bills are provided via email.

Vacations: As noted above, Little Learning Academy automatically provides one-week vacation tuition credit per student per school year. This credit is already accounted for within your monthly tuition rate. For scheduling and appropriate teacher to student ratios, please let us know via email when your child will be out for vacation.

About Late Tuition Fees: Your account is considered late after 5 days past due and late charges will be added in the following manner: \$25.00 after 5 days, \$50.00 after 7 days, and \$75.00 after 9 days. If your account is 10 days late, it will result in termination of enrollment. There are NO EXCEPTIONS.

NJ State Aid: LLA will accept state childcare subsidy for qualified applicants. Contact the Department of Children's Services at 856-374-6376 to inquire.

Attendance, Schedules, and Absences: LLA opens promptly at 7:30am and closes promptly at 6:00pm (please plan to arrive by 5:55pm for pick up). This schedule allows necessary preparation for opening and closing, for proper teacher/student ratios and to be fair to our employees.

You will notice drop off and pick up times on your Registration Form/Tuition Contract and may receive link to a survey. Please indicate the drop off and pick up times you expect (to the best of your current knowledge of course!). It is imperative that we know who and how many students are expected in each time window due to staffing requirements. *If your child will not be attending on a scheduled day, please call the office to let us know.

Please notify LLA by 9:15am if your child will be absent. It also helpful for us to understand the nature of the absence, such as due to illness. No credit toward tuition or registration is given for absences or required school closures deemed necessary for the safety of the children and staff. We will contact you if your child has missed three consecutive days of childcare and we have not spoken. If after two weeks our staff has not been able to reach you, we will assume your departure/termination of enrollment and your child will be dismissed from the program.

Schedule Changes: Please contact us to request and to confirm any and all schedule changes. 'Make up days' are not offered if LLA is closed on a day your child typically attends, or if your schedule change was not approved. **Due to strict staffing requirements, schedule changes may be difficult. If the schedule change is approved and is permanent, a new registration form will be required.

Half Day Program: Please keep in mind our half-day sessions end at 12:15 pm. Please pick children up no later than 12:15pm. LLA prepares for napping no later than 12:20pm. Please note that the building may be dark at pick-up time. Please do your best to be prompt in picking up your child to eliminate distractions at naptime.

If your child is a full-day child, but you are picking him/her up early or during naptime, we would appreciate the courtesy of a phone call so we may prepare for the early pick-up.

Late Pick Up Fees: LLA closes at 6pm. Please plan to arrive by 5:55pm to support our building closure at 6pm. If you are unable to pick up on time, YOU MUST NOTIFY US. A late pick-up charge of \$25.00 per fifteen minutes, per child, will be added to your account. For example, if pick-up occurs 6:00-6:15 pm, a \$25 fee is applied. If pick up occurs 6:16-6:30 pm, a \$50.00 fee and so on.

Checking Your Child In and Out of LLA: Using the Brightwheel app upon arrival and departure from LLA, scan the QR code or use the touchscreen at the lower entry door and use the prompts as indicated. All children MUST be individually checked in, and out EVERY DAY they are present. If you have more than one child enrolled at LLA, you MUST check-in/out each child. This is required daily for every student upon entering and exiting LLA.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures: Upon arrival and departure from the center, parents will have personal contact with a staff member. Sharing how your child's night and morning went is crucial in helping us to best navigate the day and support your child's needs.

Drop Off Procedure:

- Please ring the bell at the outside entry door and check your child in using Brightwheel.
- An LLA team member will meet you at the door, screen your child for communicable diseases and support them in washing their hands.
- Your child will be walked to their classroom with their belongings to get settled in and ready to have FUN!
- Please see the section below for What to Bring To LLA. Lunches and belongings will be stored in your child's LLA bag in their dedicated cubby.
- We will reintroduce special events and scheduled mornings for occasional drop offs where you bring your child to their classroom. As always, we will continue to consider best health and safety practices for all. All special drop off days will be indicated on the monthly activity calendar.
- ***Circle time starts at 9am and is the start of our teaching and play activities. Please try your best to have your child here by then to avoid interruptions and for children to be best prepared.

Pick Up Procedure:

- We are limiting entry to one adult per child, again to avoid overcrowding.
- Before entering our school, please wash your hands or use the hand sanitizer provided by the sink outside the office door.
- There is a small keypad at the top door. Regular authorized pick-up people will be given a code to enter on the keypad and use Brightwheel to check your child out and enter the second set of secure doors. You can then walk to your child's classroom.
- For occasions where a non-parent is authorized to pick up, those people will use the Quick Pick-Up option only (ring the bell at the outside entry and ask for assistance; your student will be brought to you with their belongings). You will be asked for identification.
- If you are experiencing COVID or FLU like symptoms, please avoid entering LLA or feel free to utilize our Quick Pick-Up option. If you have mild cold symptoms, please consider wearing a mask while picking up.

Parking For Drop Off and Pick Up: Please DO NOT BLOCK the driveway! If you need to park at the end of the driveway, PLEASE PULL ALL THE WAY TO THE RIGHT so a car can pass. If the driveway is blocked it is a violation of our lease. Please also do not block residential driveways when parking on street. Tickets and possible towing can be the result.

What To Bring To LLA:

- A canvas tote bag will be provided to all students to bring to and from LLA daily. Replacement and extra canvas totes are available for \$15.
- It is very important to LABEL EVERYTHING you send to school, and for some items, this is a state requirement. This includes coats, lunch boxes, cups, clothing, sheets, blankets, forks, spoons, containers, pacifiers, and any special stuffed animal sent for napping.
- Lunch bags or a bento box, and nap items must fit in the bag. Please see details below about lunches and nap items.
- If your child is masking, please be sure extra clean masks are provided in their bag daily. Children are strongly encouraged but never forced to wear the mask.

Nap Items: All students that attend full day are required to bring in a crib or toddler sheet and a small blanket. Nap items should be in a 2 ½ gallon Ziploc bag (or similar) and placed in the canvas tote bag. A small stuffed friend may be included and used for nap only. Oversized items or stuffed animals are not permitted, and you will be notified of any issues. Please ensure all nap items are washed weekly and returned clean and fresh!

Change of Clothes: Please supply two complete weather appropriate changes of clothing, including socks and underwear in a storage bag with your child's name on each item. These items will stay in your child's cubby and used as necessary. If these clothes are used, please send in a replacement ASAP. This policy is in place so we do not have to contact you if a change is needed. LLA does not provide extra clothing. If a change of clothes is needed and not available, you will be contacted to bring clothing or pick up your child.

Toys from Home: To eliminate unnecessary conflicts and tears, toys from home cannot be brought to school. Appropriate toys from home are ONLY allowed on show and share days which are noted on the monthly calendar. Please explain to your child our policy so that their toys stay safely at home, and no one has hurt feelings. LLA provides many toys and age-appropriate fun things to do. Toys from home will NOT be accepted.

Lunches and Snack/Snack Menu: Please send your child's lunch in a brown bag with disposable baggies or use a bento box. If lunch items need to be refrigerated, please note that on the package along with your child's name. Lunch is served at 11:30/11:45. Every Friday is pizza day, and two slices of pizza, fruit, and water will be served for \$3. To participate, include

payment in your child's folder/LLA canvas bag. A labeled, lidded cup can be brought and will be left in your child's cubby and must be taken home daily to be cleaned.

Please note, we are not a nut-free school. Should you have severe allergy concerns, please contact us and we will plan accordingly for your child's classroom.

Birthdays: Please feel free to send in a special snack for your child's classroom on his/her special day. Special snacks from home **MUST** be sealed. **NOTHING HOMEMADE IS PERMITTED** ☹️ Small portions are best! Birthdays are a **BIG** deal around here and we love to celebrate. Your child's teacher can inform you of any dietary concerns in the classroom and help with birthday plans.

Special Events/Monthly Activity Calendar: LLA offers special fun events and special visitors throughout the school year. All visitors and special guests are fully screened. These events are optional, and the cost will be included on the school calendar. Please know if for any reason your child can not attend, we will not allow the child to feel excluded and will offer him/her something fun to do. Payment should be included in your child's folder/LLA canvas bag. The activity calendar is always available in the Brightwheel App.

Emergency Closing: If LLA is closed, delayed, or needs to close during the school day due to inclement weather or an emergency, the closing/delay will be posted via the Brightwheel App and via email. Please be certain notifications for the app are turned on!

Playground/Physical Activity and Safety Policy: We provide at least 30 minutes of physical activity and outdoor play at least twice per day (weather permitting). We like to play outside often! We perform safety checks on all equipment and keep a checklist of inspections in the office.

Sunblock: Sunblock should be applied at home prior to drop-off. A blanket permission for topical application is required in order for sunblock to be applied – please ensure this form is completed fully when registering your child. LLA will reapply sunblock that has been provided by parent/guardian only, and the container must be clearly labeled with the child's name and application instructions. Sticks and sprays are much preferred! Please see Policy on Administering Medication regarding state requirements for labeling.

Formal Assessments: Child assessments, reports, and achievement records will be sent home throughout the school year. Formal Assessments are issued in January and June. Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled in January and can also be requested as needed.

Policy for Developmental Screening and Monitoring: LLA is committed to partnering with families to ensure positive outcomes for children. In order to identify potential delays early on so that appropriate supports can be put in place, we will perform ongoing developmental screening and monitoring processes that may alert us when more assessment is appropriate. Screening tools should not indicate that children are at risk of a delay – just that more assessment is necessary.

- Teachers will monitor a child's development and track parents' concerns.
- Development and Monitoring screening will be used as part of the process of learning about individual child's development.
- Comprehensive developmental screening includes consideration of a child's physical, cognitive, language and social-emotional development.
- All screening and monitoring information will be done in close collaboration with families.

LLA will use the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3), a parent-completed child monitoring system. The ASQ can identify infants and young children who are in need of further assessment to determine whether they are eligible for early intervention or early childhood special education services.

- The ASQ will be given to parents to complete at home or at the school if they choose to do so.
- The classroom teacher will score the questionnaire and provide feedback to parents.
- ASQ screening will be used once a year in the winter and will be used for all children.
- Teachers will request a conference to share screening results. Referral recommendations will be given to parents based on screening results.
- For children enrolled while receiving referred or specialized services, monthly meetings will be held with the person providing the special services such as a therapist, the parents of the child, classroom teacher, the assistant director and/or director.
- The screening will be repeated every six months for referred children.

Home Language Policy: LLA is responsive to serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations. We are supporting of other languages through labeling of centers throughout the classrooms and by providing access to classroom materials in the home language. We also provide pictures when necessary, around the classroom and our children will benefit from learning basic sign language. Our center is open to allowing families to provide home materials in the child's language to support the child and the teacher.

Policy on LLA Employee and Parent Connections Outside of LLA: We ask that all parents refrain from any inquiry about teachers and staff connecting or working together outside of LLA, including babysitting. While we love that our families love our teachers, LLA employees are prohibited from soliciting, either verbally, in writing, via social media or otherwise, or accepting opportunities for employment, including babysitting, from parents of current or previous LLA students while employed with LLA and for six months following any separation of employment. Communications between families and employees should be via the Little Learning Academy communication channels only, and not by direct sharing of personal contact details. Please understand this is a legal requirement.

Policy on Breastfeeding: Breastfeeding has been shown to be the best form of infant nutrition. Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided with a private and sanitary place to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area will have an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water. Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies, and breastfeeding promotion/resources will be displayed at the center.

Policy on Diapering: A labeled bag of diapers/pull-ups and wipes should be left at LLA for your child's use. A note will be sent home when your supply is getting low. Please restock ASAP as LLA does not provide these items.

According to the Manual of Standards for Child Care Centers:

1. The center shall ensure that children's diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
2. A staff member shall wash and dry each child during each diaper change with an individual sanitary cloth.

We change diapers whenever necessary. If clothes are wet or damp, we will also change their outfits. Children in diapers should always have a supply of diapers and wipes available.

If ointment is needed, a Medication Permission Form must be completed, or it will not be applied.

Regarding pull-ups, the type with velcro sides is much preferred! This helps with potty training (see below).

Policy on Toilet Training: In the toddler classes, we bring the entire class to the bathroom about 3-4 times a day (after snack approx. 9:50, before nap, approx. 12:20, after nap approx. 2:30 and again in the afternoon). The children are encouraged to "try" whether they feel they need to go. Because the whole class goes and it is a part of our day, any fear of the bathroom is avoided.

Parents decide when they want their child to change from diapers to pull-ups or underpants. Your communication to us is important. If your child is potty training please send in MULTIPLE complete outfits (5) - underwear, clothing, socks, and shoes (rubber shoes, like Crocs, are best). If underwear is not available, a pull-up with velcro sides will be used as per Safe

and Healthy Standards. When accidents happen, it is important your child has these items, so they are comfortable and do not get discouraged.

During these transitions, we pay special attention and ask in between normal bathroom times if the child feels the need to go. A great deal of praise is given when children first wear underpants and the first time they go on the toilet. Stickers and notes of praise go home, and all the teachers come in and praise the child.

The whole process is very positive, and at no time is a child disciplined for having an accident. We guide and encourage them through this stage in their development.

Technology: The use of television, computers, and other video equipment shall be limited to educational and instructional use, shall be age and developmentally appropriate, and shall not be used as a substitute for planned activities or for passive viewing.

Policy on Social Media & Photos: This policy applies to parents, staff, board members and volunteers. This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- All public social networking sites and groups (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat)
- Blogs
- Discussion forums
- Collaborative online spaces
- Media Sharing services (i.e. You Tube)
- Micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter)

As part of our duty to safeguard children, it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families. As per the State of New Jersey Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing, we are required to inform you that:

- No photographs taken within the preschool setting or at preschool special events and outings with the children are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child. Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. (This excludes those photographs taken by staff for use on the LLA website and in other advertising material if parental permission is given on the Website Photo Authorization form).
- No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding the preschool children, staff or preschool board business (except appropriate use for marketing fund raising events) or that could be construed to have any impact on the preschool's reputation or that would offend any member of staff or parent associated with the preschool.
- Staff are advised to manage their personal security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with.
- Staff should not accept parents as friends due to it being a breach of expected professional conduct unless they already know them in a personal capacity before their child starts at preschool. Staff should avoid personal communication, including on social networking sites, with the children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity.
- If staff names the preschool or workplace in any social media, they do so in a way that is not detrimental to the preschool or its families. In addition, staff will observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues relating to work. Staff should not share information they would not want children, parents or colleagues to view. Staff and parents should report any concerns or breaches to the preschool director.
- Any member of staff, parent or volunteer found to be posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality, bring the preschool into disrepute or that are deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the preschool or other employees, or posting/publishing photographs of the setting, children or staff, may face disciplinary action in line with the Pre-School disciplinary procedures. Any comment deemed to be inappropriate is to be reported to the director or a member of the preschool board and any action taken will be at their discretion.

General guidelines for using social media:

- Personal security settings should be managed to ensure that information is only available to people you choose to share information with.
- Remember that no information sent over the web is totally secure and as such if you do not wish the information to be made public refrain from sending it through social media.
- Maintain professionalism, honesty and respect.
- Apply a “good judgement” test for every social media post you make.

Policy on Administering Medication: This applies to over-the-counter, prescribed and topical medications and treatments. Assuring the health and safety of all children in our center is a team effort. Understanding each of our responsibilities, policies and procedures concerning medication administration is critical to meeting that goal.

In accordance with State Licensing Requirements, LLA will **ONLY** administer medication, either prescribed or purchased over the counter, when a Medication Permission Form is on file AND when a parent has provided training to LLA staff on how and when to administer. Medication Permissions are communicated through Brightwheel and also may require a physician’s signature. Medication must be provided in original container with the prescription label with dosage and identifying information clearly stated. LLA will then administer said medication for a period of two weeks. After that time period, a new Medication Permission Form will need to be completed by the child’s physician.

If the medication is given regularly or on an as-needed basis AND is listed on your child’s Universal Health Form, Medication Permission Forms need to be completed every 3-6 months depending on the medication. This is also a State Licensing Requirement.

Per State Licensing Requirements, the following guiding principles and procedures apply:

1. Whenever possible, it is best that medication be given at home. Dosing of medication can frequently be done so that the child receive medication prior to going to childcare, and again when returning home and/or bedtime. You are encouraged to discuss this possibility with the child’s health care provider.
2. The first dose of any medication should always be given at home and with sufficient time before the child returns to childcare to observe the child’s response to medication given. When a child is ill due to a communicable disease that requires medication as treatment, the health care provider may require that the child be on a particular medication for 24 hours before returning to childcare. This is for the protection of the child who is ill as well as the other children in childcare.
3. Medication will only be given when ordered by the child’s health care provider and with written consent of the child’s parent/legal guardian. Medication must be provided in original container with the prescription label with dosage and identifying information clearly stated.
4. “As Needed” medications may be given only when the child’s health care provider completes a Medication Permission Form that lists specific reasons and times when such medication can be given.
5. Any prescription or over the counter medication brought to Little Learning Academy **MUST** be specific to the child who is to receive the medication, in its original container, have a child-resistant safety cap, and be labeled with the information as follows:
 - a. Prescription medication must have the original pharmacy label that includes the pharmacist’s phone number, the child’s full name, name of the health care provider prescribing the medication, name and expiration date of the medication, the date it was prescribed or updated, dosage, route, frequency and any special instructions for its administration and storage. It is suggested that the parent/guardian ask the pharmacy to provide the medication in two containers, one for home and one for use in childcare.
 - b. Over the counter (OTC) medication must have the child’s full name on the original box/container, and the manufacturer’s original label with dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions for administration and storage, and the expiration date must be clearly visible.
 - c. Any OTC medication without instructions for administration specific to the age of the child receiving the medication must have a completed Medication Permission Form from the health care provider prior to being given in the childcare center.
 - d. Examples of OTC medications that may be given include antihistamines, decongestants, non-aspirin fever reducers/pain relievers, cough suppressants, topical ointments, such as diaper cream or sunscreen.

- e. All medications will be stored inaccessible to children and separate from staff or others' medications.
- f. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to manage and track expiration dates, refills, and to quality control all labeling information. Expired medication will not be administered.

Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases: Staff, children and anyone permitted to enter this premise is required to have a daily health check every day, and in addition to our general exclusion criteria, will be excluded for:

- Temperature of 100.4 or higher
- New loss of taste or smell
- Cough, muscle pain, chills
- Sore throat, shortness of breath, diarrhea, runny nose with a combination of symptoms, nausea or vomiting

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she should also not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group, and you will be called to take him/her home.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe pain or discomfort • Diarrhea • Vomiting • Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit • Sore throat/Severe coughing • Lethargy • Yellow eyes/Jaundice skin • Red eyes with discharge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infected, untreated skin patches • Difficult or rapid breathing • Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding • Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes • Swollen joints • Visibly enlarged lymph nodes • Stiff neck • Blood in urine |
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Once the child is symptom free for 24 hours without medication (such as fever reducer or diarrhea medication) or has a doctor's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to themselves or others, the child may return to the center unless contraindicated by local health department or Department of Health. Restrictions due to exposure to Covid, symptoms of Covid or positive test result apply – please see Health and Safety Policy below.

Excludable Communicable Diseases: A child who contracts any of the following diseases may not return to the center without a physician's note stating that the child presents no risk to themselves or others.

Respiratory Illnesses: Chicken Pox**, German Measles, Hemophilus Influenza, Measles, Meningococcus*, Mumps*, Strep Throat, Tuberculosis*, Whooping Cough*, COVID Variants*

Gastrointestinal Illnesses: Giardia Lamblia*, Hepatitis A*, Salmonella*, Shigella*, Meningococcus*

Contact Illnesses: Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease, Ringworm, Impetigo, Scabies

*Reportable diseases that will be reported to the health department by the center.

**If your child has chicken pox, a doctor's note is not required in order to return to school. A note from the parent is required stating either that at least six days have elapsed since the onset of the rash, or that all sores have dried and crusted.

Policy on Limiting Exposure to Communicable Diseases: If your child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, you will be notified. Our goal is to keep children and staff in school by keeping them healthy. One way we can do that is to follow the guidelines below. All LLA staff will follow this protocol as well, and all staff will be required to be fully vaccinated against Covid.

- **FEVER:** Your child should be fever free for 24 hours, or the next school day, (without fever reducer) before returning to LLA.

- UPSET STOMACH: If a temperature accompanies the upset stomach or vomiting, stay home. Your child must be vomit free for 24 hours before returning to LLA.
- COLDS: If there is a fever present, if the child is irritable and lethargic, or if there is frequent coughing, sneezing, or excess mucus, stay home.
- DIARRHEA: STAY HOME...Highly contagious. Your child should be free from diarrhea for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.
- PINK EYE/CONJUNCTIVITIS: STAY HOME...Highly contagious. Seek medical treatment and administer medication for 24 hours prior to returning child to LLA. A doctor's note should be obtained to confirm treatment for pink eye.
- COVID VARIANTS: STAY HOME...Highly contagious. Please call the office to inform of any exposure or positive test result ASAP. We have a Test to Stay policy.

In addition to these guidelines, we will monitor symptoms and temperatures to ensure our LLA community stays as healthy and safe as possible. To mitigate the spread of communicable diseases, LLA will follow the safety guidelines from healthcare professionals based on case studies and illnesses in our region. We are a "mask optional" center, however updates to this policy will be made as necessary and will be shared as needed.

***The continual habit of bringing a sick child into the center may be considered a violation of our "disruption of daily operations to the center" clause as stated in our Expulsion Policy. While we understand that life and work go on even when illness occurs, the best interest of your child and the children and employees at the center are paramount. If an employee observes that a child repeatedly exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease, they will not permit that child entry into the center until such a time that the symptoms are alleviated. We reserve the right to make this decision.

Policy on Positive Redirection and Discipline: LLA complies with all federal, state and other relevant laws, which prohibit hitting/corporal punishment in childcare settings. Additionally, staff is expressly prohibited from using unproductive or shaming methods of punishment including but not limited to shaking, withholding food, punishing children for soiling clothing, not eating, not sleeping, or using abusive or threatening language/tone. In addition, LLA staff will not require children to sit silently for long periods of time.

LLA believes that parents and childcare staff must work together to address persistent behavioral issues such as biting, unusual or dangerous aggression, or other issues. Parents will be contacted for a conference when a child appears to be unusually stressed, anxious or otherwise motivated to engage in negative behaviors. Our staff is trained and experienced and we do know your child well. We offer you information and request meetings or communication in efforts to best support you and your child.

Policy on Expulsion: Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced, and expulsion is always a last resort. LLA makes every effort to individualize efforts to avoid expulsion and to address special needs on a case by case basis. The following are reasons we may have to terminate enrollment or suspend a child:

Parental actions for the child's expulsion:

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child
- Physical or verbal abuse to staff

Child's actions for expulsion:

- Failure of the child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time

- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to children or staff
- Excessive biting
- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.

Proactive actions that will be taken in order to prevent expulsion:

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriateness of activities and supervision
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules
- Child will be given verbal warnings
- A brief resting period will be given so that child can regain control
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion
- The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior
- Director may recommend evaluation by professional consultation and/or recommend evaluation by local school district's child study team.

Schedule of expulsion:

If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center.

- The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period
- The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child/parent to return
- The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent an adequate amount of time to seek alternative child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety)
- Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

A child will not be expelled if a child's parent(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements (877-677-9845)
- Report abuse or neglect occurring at the center (800-215-6853) or (800-792-8610 after 5pm)
- Questioning the center regarding policies and procedures
- Without giving the parent an adequate amount of time (2 weeks) to make other arrangements unless any child or staff member is at risk of imminent danger.

New Jersey Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing Policy on The Release of Children: A completed Pick Up, Medical and Emergency Information/Authorization form MUST be completed for each child enrolled. Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fail to pick up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child is supervised at all times;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the Division's 24 hour State Central Registry Hotline **(1-877-NJ-ABUSE)** to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the Director and or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline **(1-877-NJ-ABUSE)** to seek assistance in caring for the child.

For school aged childcare programs, no child shall be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instruction from the child's parent(s).

LLA is impartial concerning family disputes and custody arrangements and will abide as noted above.

National/Local Emergency Disaster Plan Policy: At LLA, our main focus is the safety of the children. Based on the situation at hand, we would focus on containment; i.e., getting everyone in one location. If damage or weather threatens the safety of our building, we would relocate to the lunchroom area of the church. This is an area with limited windows and is attached to our school; however, it is not a part of our school. If complete evacuation for any reason is necessary, we will walk to the Zane North School, Lees Avenue, Collingswood.

All our employees carry cell phones and have access to Brighthouse; hopefully we would be able to communicate with the outside world. We will have a radio to listen to local news.

If we are in a lockdown situation we will remain in a safe area of our school and all doors will be locked allowing no entry or exit from the building until a safe time. We will all gather in the purple room or church cafeteria until cleared of lockdown. We will contact parents and make them aware of the lockdown.

Please be sure all contact details, including emergency contacts are up to date on Brightwheel. The emergency contact you designate should be in relative proximity to the center, have access to a vehicle (not have to rely on public transportation or crossing a bridge to get here), and be available in the event of an emergency to pick up your child in the event you are unable. This emergency information will be kept in a special binder AND electronically, which will enable us easy access to speed our communication with you and/or your emergency contact.

Best Practices for Healthy Eating and Physical Development: Healthy Foods and Beverages/Foods Brought from Home: Balanced food choices are encouraged. LLA acknowledges the importance of good nutrition in the healthy growth and development of young children. The eating practices developed in childhood tend to shape future food choices.

Presenting healthy foods to children in a positive and consistent manner begins the lifelong process of nutrition management. Children often required repeated exposure to new foods, sometimes up to 15 times, before acceptance. As such, our program has established recommendations for parents to follow when packing their child's daily lunch.

- Include at least one fruit and vegetable per meal. Avoid fruits packed in sugar-based syrup.
- Avoid foods that are high in fat, sugar, trans fats and/or sodium.
- Water is recommended as a beverage for children and will be provided at the center.
- Limit 100 percent fruit juice to six ounces per day and avoid all sugar-sweetened beverages. Do not provide juice to children under the age of one.
- Provide skim or 1 percent fat milk to children over the age of two.
- Bananas, apples, oranges, grapes (pre-cut to prevent choking), mangos, as well as cubed honeydew, cantaloupe, and watermelon, make wonderful choices for dessert. Remove seeds where appropriate.
- Select breads and crackers with a high proportion of whole grains.
- Provide only healthy selections when bringing in birthday and holiday celebration treats.

Get Kids Moving: Preschoolers need two or more hours of active play time every day. Toddlers should have at least an hour of active play time each day. Physical activity helps children stay at a healthy weight and reduces their risk of developing obesity-related illnesses, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. It also has been shown to help relieve feelings of stress and depression and reduce behavioral problems.

Reduce Screen Time: Limit screen time to 30 minutes a week or less for preschoolers during childcare. Screen time for toddlers and babies should be limited to four times or less a year, preferably none, in childcare. Childcare providers should provide media literacy education to parents of preschoolers at least twice a year. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) discourages the use of screen time for children under two years and recommends a limit of 1-2 hours a day for children two years and older. Screen time is not just watching TV; it also includes time spent playing on a computer, cell phone, tablet, or video game.

Grow New Jersey Kids: Grow NJ Kids is a state-sponsored initiative to raise the quality of childcare and early learning. GNJK offers childcare and early learning centers resources to assess and improve their programs, while providing parents with information that allows them to evaluate quality and options to make the best choices for their child. The goal is to create a system that encourages ongoing improvement. LLA is a proud participant and is working toward the highly respected quality rating of four stars. Many of our policies are developed in accordance with strict GNJK standards. You can learn more at www.grownjkids.gov.

Partnerships with Parents: Miss Debbie will host a Parent Information Series quarterly and will regularly provide informative resources for parents. These may include presentations, special speakers and resources related to Early Childhood Education, Family Development and Support for Parents. Information will be shared on the newsletter and/or the activity calendar. Partnerships with parents and families are an important part of our program.

Community Connections Handbook: LLA is dedicated to all aspects of early childhood development and community support. Resources such as community groups, development resources, state programs and local support information is available upon request and in our Parent Resource section near the office door.

Your Child's "Medical Home": The American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Center for Medical Home Implementation want children, youth and families across the country to know that every child and youth deserves a "Medical Home." A Medical Home is not a place – it is the way care is provided to your child/youth and your family. At the core of a Medical Home is a knowledgeable, compassionate health care provider and care team chosen by a patient and their family to take care of a child's health needs. Details about establishing a Medical Home will be provided with your registration documents and are available at www.medicalhomeinfo.org.

Behavior Guidance/Guidelines for Positive Discipline: Children are not expected to immediately understand or fully comply with all rules; rather, they are to be gently taught, reminded and when necessary, redirected. The staff has the responsibility to set up the environment to encourage cooperation and sharing, rather than promoting aggressive behaviors.

There are times when children, because they are “testing the limits,” may actually endanger themselves or others by their actions. Due to these actions, specific behavior guidance steps have been set up and will be followed by the staff. These are:

Logical Consequences: A child who damages a toy, for instance, may be prohibited from the use of that toy for the play period in question. A child who intentionally spills or throws food will be required to assist in the cleanup of the spill.

Redirection/Modeling Behavior/Role Models: Often it is necessary to redirect the child’s attention and/or model behavior. For example, Let’s try it this way...Why don’t we play with this instead... Let’s all sit nicely like...

Verbal Reprimand: These are brief verbal, behavioral guidance measures consisting of a statement of the problem behavior, the fact that it is unacceptable, and the statement of the acceptable alternative.

Time For Rest: At times a child may require time to himself to calm down and redirect his/her thinking. When a rest time is given, the child remains within sight of the staff at all times and no longer than the age of the child in minutes (i.e., for a 4-year-old, it wouldn’t be longer than 4 minutes). We will notify the parent if the child has three or more rest periods in one day, or five times or more in one week or eight times or more in a two-week period.

Positive Discipline: Positive Discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do, encouraging positive self-esteem.

You can use Positive Discipline by planning ahead:

- Anticipate and eliminate potential problems.
- Have consistent, clear rules that are explained to children & understood by adults.
- Have a well-planned daily schedule.
- Plan for ample elements of fun and humor.
- Include some group decision-making.
- Provide time and space for each child to feel some positive impact on the group.
- Provide the structure and support each child’s need to resolve their differences.
- Share ownership and responsibility with children.

You can use Positive Discipline by intervening when necessary:

- Redirect to a new activity to change the focus of a child’s behavior.
- Provide individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation.
- Divert the child and remove from the area of conflict.
- Remove the child from the activity for a few minutes so that he/ she may gain self-control. (One minute for each year of the child’s age is a good rule of thumb. This is different than rest period.)
- Provide alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings.
- Point out natural or logical consequences of children’s behavior.
- Offer a choice only if there are two acceptable options.
- Criticize the behavior, not the child. Don’t say “bad boy” or “bad girl” but instead you might say “That is not allowed here.” Do not criticize; instead, encourage better choices.

You can use Positive Discipline by showing love and encouragement:

- “Catch the child being good,” Respond to and reinforce positive behavior;
- Acknowledge or praise to let the child know you approve of what he/she is doing.

- Provide positive reinforcement through rewards for good behavior.
- Use encouragement rather than competition, comparison, or criticism.
- Overlook small annoyances, and deliberately ignore provocations.
- Give hugs and loving care to every child every day.
- Appreciate the child's point of view and listen to "the why."
- Be loving, but don't confuse loving with license.

New Jersey Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing - Information to Parents: Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52), every licensed childcare center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents and staff this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent and staff member's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center. To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record-keeping requirements; and others. Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy. Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at https://data.nj.gov/childcare_explorer

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children. Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it. Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interests with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/ (877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to www.state.nj.us/dcf/.

LITTLE LEARNING ACADEMY | RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING OF POLICIES

I have read, received, and understand Little Learning Academy’s Policies and the Office of Licensing Policies as outlined in this Parent Handbook, including:

- Mission, Vision, Philosophy and Curriculum
- Communication Channels
- Registration Information, Tuition and Fees
- NJ State Aid
- Attendance, Schedule Change and Absences
- Checking In and Out of School; Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures
- What to Bring to LLA; Lunches and Snacks/Snack Menu
- Events and Activity Calendar
- Physical Safety Policy
- Formal Assessments, Screening and Monitoring
- Home Language Policy
- Employee and Parent Connections Policy
- Breastfeeding Policy
- Diapering and Toilet Training Policies
- Use of Technology and Social Media Policies
- Medication Permission Policy
- Policy on Communicable Diseases
- Positive Redirection and Discipline Policy
- Expulsion Policy
- Policy on the Release of Children
- Disaster Plan Policy
- Best Practices for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity/Foods Brought From Home
- Grow New Jersey Kids
- Parent Participation/PTA/Parent Information Series
- Community Connections Resource Handbook
- Medical Home
- Behavior Guidance/Guidelines for Positive Discipline
- NJ Information to Parents

CHILD’S NAME: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____