

Little School House

Learning Center

Parent Handbook

10/23/20

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS.**

- To create an environment full of learning experiences that will meet the needs of each individual child.
- To provide qualified teachers who can create an environment where the children can develop intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially.

Little School House Learning Center provides full time group care to children from 6 weeks to five years of age and an after-school program. The goal of our center is to enhance the children's learning and development through planned educational activities and play. Our center is not based on one specific philosophy. We try to teach our children with a mixture of teacher directed and child directed techniques. In teaching our children we try to bring in as many "real" learning experiences as possible. For example, when learning about winter we may talk about how water turns into ice and show this in an experiment in our science lesson. We feel that learning social skills is the most important of any of the developmental areas.

We work with the children on relating to friends and making good choices on their own, all of which is part of building social skills. Our goal is to teach our children to be creative thinkers. All staff attends at least 35 of training hours per year and plan their days to be developmentally appropriate to their age group. Little School House Learning Center is in compliance with the Texas Health and Human Services staff/child ratios.

## **MOTTO**

Little School House Learning Center is an educational place, which promotes school readiness of children from birth to 12 years old, through developmentally appropriate practices. Neuroscientists suggest, that school readiness intervention might come too late if children start after they turn three. At Little School House Learning Center, our mission is to foster school readiness programs as early as birth.

## **OPERATING HOURS/DAYS & HOLIDAYS**

The center is open Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 pm. The center closes for several holidays throughout the year. All holidays are standard closing with the exception of Christmas and New Year, which may vary from year to year. The holidays are as follows: Good Friday, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (Thursday & Friday), Christmas Day and New Year. The center has early release twice Christmas Eve and New Year. Tuition remains the same even during holiday months.

**\*\*Please note:** All traditional Holidays (i.e. Halloween, Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc.) are openly celebrated at this Academy. If you do not wish for your child to participate in holiday parties, please make other childcare arrangements for them during those times.

*We also have optional prayers before eating lunch.*

## **DAILY SCHEDULE / PHYSICAL ACTIVITY / SCREENING TIME**

Each classroom has a daily schedule. The schedule for each group is planned to meet their physical, social, emotional and learning needs. The schedule is arranged into blocks of activity throughout the day. All schedules are posted in your child's classroom. We are a learning center and it is important that the children are in their classrooms and ready to begin the day at 8:30 am, therefore they do not miss out on their daily lessons. It is also very distinctive to our learning times and to the other children in the classroom when children are brought to the center late. Physical activity is vital for a child's development and lays the foundation for a healthy and active life.

We foster the development of good physical activity habits early in life and to encourage families to engage in regular physical activity. To enhance our curriculum even more, television and electronics are not used to provide instruction; however, tablets are implemented only in the Prek classrooms to enhance the learning with activities based on the curriculum themes. These activities are twice a week and no more than 30 minutes per day.

Little School House Learning Center offers a wide choice of play-based, physically active learning experiences that link to children's interests, abilities, identity and prior knowledge. Physical activity in childcare needs to be made up of both structured (i.e. intentionally taught) and unstructured, (spontaneous activity). In addition, as active role models, educators can encourage children to participate in physical activity.

## **LESSON PLAN & CURRICULUM GOALS**

By the age of 5, children should master the sound system and grammar of their language and acquire a vocabulary of thousands of words. However, none of this will happen if we don't pay attention to the infant language skills development. Since the acquisition of language, is one of the most remarkable achievements of early childhood, Little School House Learning Center enhances this very important domain using the Frog Street as the Infants Program. Furthermore, we are committed to provide a nurturing and caring environment that meets the parent and children's needs.

Once infant turns eighteen months, they become "toddlers"; we implement routines and activities with consistency to provide comfort and a sense of safety to young children. Whether it is time to play, time for a snack, or a nap, knowing what will happen next gives children security and emotional stability. While in our care, children feel a sense of trust and safety. They are free to do their "work," that is, to play, explore, and learn. As infants grow and change (which happens on a daily basis at this stage) we make changes too; therefore, development and learning unfolds naturally.

Partnering with PSJA has allowed us to have Texas certified teachers who are appropriately prepared to teach our preschool students. Texas certified teachers deliver a complete, developmentally appropriate, bilingual early childhood program. Furthermore, PSJA teacher is in our campus, providing 3 hours of daily instruction in cognitive development to the Little School House Learning Center children utilizing the State Adopted Curriculum, Pre-k guidelines, and three-year-old Early Learning Guidelines. PSJA and Little School House Learning Center teachers understand and speak both languages, and of course have the required pedagogical skills. They have the heart and care for our children. Beyond being skilled teachers, they have the heart for a bilingual, culturally responsive early childhood program. The bilingual early childhood classrooms exhibit all the elements of an excellent early childhood classroom. The children, not the teacher, are doing most of the talking. Classrooms have a variety of centers with hands-on materials for the children. We don't erase Spanish for the children to learn English. Both languages will be fully developed.

When IDEA Public Schools San Juan started taking preschool students for their 3-hour program, they encountered that most of their families are working families, and they couldn't send children for that period of time. IDEA Academy San Juan found out that our approach was Direct Instruction, and then it was a win-win situation to send their students to us and continue their education. Because of this IDEA Public Schools offered us to partnership with them to provide San Juan families a positive, safe and learning environment. IDEA provides monthly visit observations to our center by a professional certified direct instruction and allows our educators to be part of their professional development. IDEA provides transportation to and from Little School House Learning Center.

After Schoolers program, encompasses a broad range of focus area including academic support, mentoring, arts, and recreation. Our main motto for this age stage is to Ignite the Love of Reading. When a child has low literacy, the impact is not reflected only on low-test scores in the classroom, but far beyond. There is a low possibility that struggling readers enter, and/or finish college education. Furthermore, these children when are adults, are less likely to have the ability to promote literacy to their own children; Thus, the cycle continues. We truly believe that when someone learns to enjoy reading, they will find reading pleasurable.

### **ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES:**

It's important for the children to attend the center on a regular basis with the exception of illness or special events. When children are not at the center on a regular basis it makes it hard for them to adjust to the routines at the center. The more days a week a child is in attendance at the center the shorter the adjustment period for them may be. **IF YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABSENT FROM THE CENTER YOU MUST CALL AND LET SOMEONE IN THE OFFICE KNOW THE REASON FOR THE ABSENCE.**

It is helpful to the center when they know types of illness to help prevent the spread throughout the center. The center is also required to report communicable diseases to the Texas Health and Human Services-Childcare Regulation.

## ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Parents are required to accompany their child into the classroom. This provides smooth transition. When the center first opens for the day and attendance is low, all preschool children may be gathered in one room (school age children are in a separate room) before they move on to their own classrooms. This provides an opportunity to get settled.

Also, at the end of the day the children may be all in the same classroom for the last 30 to 45 minutes of the day. Each child must be signed in and out in the lobby. Parents will be responsible for signing the children in and out. Each child must be brought into and picked up by an adult that is 18 years of age. Person or persons other than the parents that are picking up the child *must be on the pick-up list*. There are no exceptions. Person or persons other than the parents that have not been to the center before will always be asked for a picture ID.

## INFANT/TODDLER ROOMS

Mark all of your infants/toddlers' belongings, even your diaper bag. There may be a substitute teacher at times and what seems familiar to your baby's teacher can be most confusing to a substitute. The center will not be responsible for lost items so please do not bring meaningful blankets etc. to the center. No older children will be allowed in the infant room at any time. Furniture and toys are disinfected daily and other children like to touch and pick up things. This rule is in the best interest of the babies and is also a Texas Health and Human Services-Childcare Regulation standards.

## DIAPERING AND TOILET TRAINING:

The center does not allow pull ups at the center. Pull ups make it difficult during diaper changing for clothes have to be completely removed. Pull ups are only allowed if they are the kind that you can unfasten and refasten on the sides. Toilet training is started in the 2-year-old classroom here at the center. Toilet training can be a very emotionally experience for children, parents and teachers. With the number of children in a group this can sometimes make the process more difficult. We would like the training process to go as smoothly as possible. In toilet training parent-teacher cooperation is essential. Toilet training is one of the major hurdles in the socialization of the child. We are very happy to work with your child in toilet training once they are in the two-year-old class. We find that children are not usually ready before the age of two. Once your child is in the two-year-old class we do not push them to toilet train right away. We go with the child. When the teacher feels that your child is ready to begin training, we will let you know, and have you begin bringing panties/underwear and lots of extra clothes.

Once we start working with your child they must be brought to the center in panties/underwear. If you bring your child in a diaper (we consider pull ups diapers and don't recommend them) then they will stay in diapers that day. We WILL NOT work on toilet training with your child if you are not working at home also. It does no good for us to work with them at the center if they are not worked with at home. From past experience, I have found if you don't push the children and wait until *they* are ready, they completely toilet train in about 2 weeks or less. We feel confident that if we all work together and make this a positive experience for the children and have consistency at home and at the center this will be a very smooth process.

## CLOTHING GUIDELINES

**TOYS, MONEY, AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS ARE TO REMAIN AT HOME!!!**

Bringing these items to the center creates conflict among children. Personal belongings may be lost, broken, and causes stress to the child. We will not be responsible for lost, stolen or broken items brought from home.

### CLOTHING

Every child must ALWAYS have two extra change of clothes at the center. We never know when they may spill something on their clothing or have an accident. When being potty trained, children need to have several changes of underwear at the center at all times. All clothing must be labeled to prevent loss, this includes coats etc. Clothing whom to the center should be appropriate for active *messy* play. Remember when dressing your child that we do many messy activities that involve paints etc. Children spend time outdoors each day unless the weather is extremely bad outdoor play is healthy for children and is required by Texas Health and Human Services-Childcare Regulation standard.

**Children who are too sick to go outside are too sick to be at the center.** Outdoor wear must be appropriate. Coats must be brought on cold days.

## **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Texas Health and Human Services-Childcare Regulation standards requires that each childcare center have a plan to follow to verify the identity of a person authorized to pick up a child who is unknown to the staff. Children are released only to those people designated by the parents on their enrollment form. Our plan is as follows:

1. Checking driver's license of persons other than parents who have been authorized to pick up. (even parents if we've never seen you before or new staff have not met you).
2. All new parents and staff will immediately be introduced to prevent the child leaving with unauthorized persons.
3. Staff members who do not recognize the person picking up will check the child's enrollment file to find out who is authorized to pick up and/or call the parent if necessary.

Information on pick up by person other than parents will be kept in the child's file. Any person whose behavior or health, appear to be an endangerment to themselves or the children will not be allowed in the center to pick up children.

## **LATE PICK UP**

Late pick up of children will result in an additional charge of \$1.00 per minute for the first 5 minutes and \$2 a minute after the first 5 minutes. This must be paid at the time the child is picked up and is per child. If you have 2 children, the fee will be assessed for each child.

## **GUIDELINES FOR SENDING A CHILD HOME:**

If a child has:

- a. an oral temperature of 100.4.
  - b. under the arm temperature of 99.4, the temperature will be rechecked and if the temperature remains the same the parent will be notified to take the child home.
- If a child has a temperature higher than 99.4 but less than 100.4 and/or has symptoms of one or more of the following, the parent will be asked to pick the child up and take them to the doctor.
- a. CHICKEN POX: Slight fever, fine blisters appearing on scalp, face or body.
  - b. DIARRHEA: Increase or change in child's usual bowel movement pattern (two loose stools)
  - c. GERMAN MEASLES: Slight head cold, swollen glands at the back of the neck.
  - d. HAND, FOOT, AND MOUTH DISEASE: Fever, sores and blisters on the hands and feet and in the mouth. This is a viral infection.
  - e. MEASLES: Runny nose, watery eyes, high fever and cough. Blotchy rash on the body.
  - f. MUMPS: pain in cheeks, swelling over jaw and in front of ear.
  - g. PINK EYE: Red eyes, discharge from eyes, crusted eyelids.
  - h. STREPTOCOCCAL INFECTIONS; Fever or sore throat.
  - i. MENINGITIS (Viral or Bacterial): Sudden onset of fever, headache and possible vomiting.
  - j. SCARLET FEVER: Fine red rash over body, fever and sore throat.
  - k. BODY/HAIR LICE: Little bugs on body, itchy scalp.
  - l. RINGWORM: Itchy scaly patches on scalp and body.
  - m. PIN WORM: itchy rectum, little white wiggling threads on child's bottom or in stool.
  - n. IMPETIGO: Small blisters that become crusted or contain pus.
  - o. VOMITING: One instance of vomiting along with other symptoms, or two with no other symptoms usual criteria for sending child home.
  - p. RASHES AND/OR SORES: If occurs with fever, the child is sent home immediately. If rash and/or sores occur with no other symptoms but continues for two days, the child is sent home with a stipulation of seeing a physician. If rash and/or sores have been diagnosed as not contagious, but seem to be worsening again, the child can again be sent home and asked to see a physician.

## **GUIDELINES FOR RETURNING A CHILD TO THE CENTER**

It is better to keep children AT HOME until they are completely recovered from an illness and such child should have a Doctor's excuse to be able to come back to the Center. Returning a child to the center too soon only increases his/her chances of becoming sick again since their immune system has been weakened.

The following are guidelines to use to determine when your child can return to the center:

1. Children sent home because of a fever may return 24 hours after the temperature has returned to normal, off of medication.
2. Children sent home due to the following communicable diseases may return when:
  - a. Chicken pox: Sores are dried up or crusted and no new blisters are appearing.
  - b. Diarrhea: Symptoms are absent for 24 hours.
  - c. German Measles: Rash has faded
  - d. Hand, foot and mouth disease: When fever is gone, and sores/blister have cleared.
  - e. Measles: Rash has faded, and child is free of fever for 24 hours.
  - f. Pink Eye: Redness or discharge disappears. 24 hours after starting medication.
  - g. Streptococcal infections: 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun.
  - h. Scarlet Fever: 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun.
  - i. Body/hair lice: After treatment with medicated shampoo according to directions and no lice or nits remain. The condition must be closely monitored for ten days; treatment must be repeated to ensure success.
  - j. Ringworm: After medication has begun and sores are covered.
  - k. Pin worm: After nails are cut. Return the day after treatment.
  - a. Impetigo: After medicine is given and sores are covered.
  - l. Rash and/or sores: After rash and/or sores have cleared or with a letter from a doctor stating that the rash/or sores are no longer contagious.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

Medication should be given at home by the parent if at all possible. Most antibiotics are now twice a day suspension. These will not be given at the center for there is no reason that this cannot be done at home. If there is a prescribed medication that your child absolutely has to be given, you must sign a medication form in the office. All medication will be distributed to the appropriate staff to be given to the child. Over the counter medication will not be given at the center. You are welcome to drop by the center and administer needed over the counter medication. Due to the risk of other non-sick children, nebulizer treatments are not administered to any child. NO EXCEPTION. Also, we do not accept epi-pens to be used with the children. If your child has an antibiotic that is more than twice a day, the center will administer these medications. You must pick up your child's medication at the end of each day. The medications CAN NOT be given if a medication form is not signed.

## **EMERGENCIES AT THE CENTER**

As children play and explore throughout their days there may be times that accidents or injuries occur. All good programs consist of accidents due to the exploration of the environment by the children. For an illness or injury that requires the immediate attention of a health-care professional, we will; contact emergency medical services (or take the child to the nearest emergency room after you have ensured the supervision of other children in the group); give the child first-aid treatment or CPR when needed; contact the child's parent; contact the physician or other health-care professional identified in the child's record and ensure supervision of other children in the group.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Conferences will be scheduled on and as needed, but at least twice a year. If at any other time you have any questions about your child's activity at the center, the Director or your child's teacher will be happy to schedule a conference with you. Please do not try to have lengthy conversations with your child's teacher during drop-off or pick-up times. It is important that the teacher be able to give her undivided attention to the other children in the classroom. Telephone conferences can be scheduled as well as in person. Furthermore, parents will be added to a Remind application in order to keep them informed about their child and also to have a better way of communication.

## **POSITIVE PROGRESSIVE GUIDANCE (Discipline & Guidance)**

Little School House Learning Center uses positive guidance techniques. If behavioral issues occur in our center, our philosophy is to help the children learn human values and problem-solving skills and take responsibility for their choices. Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child;
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- Directed towards teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
- A Caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:
  - Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
  - Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements.
  - Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
  - Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.
- There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:
  - Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
  - Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
  - Pinching, shaking or biting a child;
  - Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
  - Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
  - Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
  - Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
  - Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed;
  - Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

## **CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR / SEPARATION PROCEDURE**

Little School House Learning Center aim is to support and guide all children to manage their own behavior and learn to resolve conflicts that arise. Children attending the service are here for new learning experiences which may test their own coping strategies. All staff will support the children to regulate their behavior and will have a number of strategies to deal with both positive and challenging behavior.

### Supporting Positive Behavior

- The learning curriculum is designed with the age and developmental stage of the child in mind.
- Each child will be assigned a key worker who will be responsible for building up a special relationship with them and their family. This helps with getting to know what the child enjoys and some of the situations they find difficult.
- Staff will be the role model of positive behavior and how they play, speak and interact with the children Explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, giving choice to the children, using language to help children understand positive decisions, getting down to the child's eye level.
- Any rules will be kept clear, simple and age appropriate.
- Staff will always comfort an upset child.
- Play activities will be used to play out challenging situation so children get the opportunity to practice positive behavior strategies.
- Books and storytelling are used to talk about feelings and what we can all do when we are angry, upset or frustrated.
- Children will have ample time to explore outdoors giving them lots of opportunity to run and feel free.

### Anticipating Inappropriate Behavior

- Each child is assigned a “key worker” who is responsible for getting to know each child and their families. This is important for gathering information and knowledge about the whole child. The key workers carry out observations and play alongside the children getting to know their likes and dislikes.
- Through their role they are in a position to begin anticipating a child’s reaction and behavior knowing what is likely to upset a child’s mood or behavior.

### Strategies for Supporting Children

- A six steps to conflict resolution approach will be used:
  1. Approach calmly – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child’s eye level. – Acknowledge feelings – describe how the child/ children are feeling, children often don’t have the language to explain how they feel leading to more frustration. Help the child by describing it for them “you both look very sad and upset”
  2. Gather information – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their said of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.
  3. Restate the problem – after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so both/ all can understand both sides of the story.
  4. Ask for ideas for solutions & choose one together (or for younger children give a solution) - give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can time a bit of time but is giving the children lots of practice compromising with one another which are vital skills they will need.
  5. Be prepared to give follow up support – it is important the staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.

### Managing Moderate Behavior Issues

This type of behavior can be recognized when inappropriate the behavior is becoming a more regular occurrence.

- The staff team will discuss the reoccurring behavior and put a plan in place
- Staff will observe the child to identify any triggers of the behavior
- When the behavior happens the steps above will be used with the child
- The matter will be discussed in detail with the child’s family

### Managing Challenging Behavior Issues

- If a child’s behavior is considered dangerous to themselves or others a staff member will carefully remove either the child or the other children from the room. This is in order to protect all using the service. The child will be given time to become calm and a staff member will help guide them with their behavior.
- The key worker will record the incident and discuss with the family.
- If a child’s behavior is ongoing or becomes severely challenging the service will implement the following strategies:
  - The staff team will carry out a meeting to discuss the behavior and plan out going forward to help the child overcome the issues.
  - The child’s key worker will carry out a number of observations to try establishing a trigger of the behavior.
  - All observations will be discussed with the family.
  - A plan will be drawn up in collaboration with the staff team and family of the child.
  - If necessary, the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.



- All information gathered and discussed will be stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.
- All meetings, plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.

If none of the above change the behavior, the following steps may be taken:

1. Teacher/Director coaching the child and contact with the parents.
2. Director, teacher, parent conference to make suggestions.
3. A second conference at which time the parent may be asked to find alternative childcare.
4. Dismissal

Any or all of the above steps may be skipped or omitted as deemed appropriate, based on the extent of the aggressive behavior and circumstance. Conversations are framed around the objective of the program. Parents are kept informed as their child progress.

### **DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY**

If your child is responsible for destruction of property due to behavior or not listening to their childcare provider, the parent will be responsible for the cost of replacing the destroyed property.

### **SAFE SLEEP POLICY**

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Little School House Learning Center will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

- Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs and for non-full-size cribs [§746.2409 and §747.2309].
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices [§746.2415 and §747.2315]. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing [§746.2429 and §747.2329].
- Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult [§746.3407(10) and §747.3203(10)].
- If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing (insert type of sleep clothing that will be used, such as sleepers or footed pajamas) as an alternative to blankets [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep [§746.2405 and §747.2305].
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2426 and §747.2326].
- Our childcare program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas childcare operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers) [§746.3703(d) and §747.3503(d)].
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound [§746.2403 and §747.2303].

If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position [§746.2427 and §747.2327].

Awake infants will have supervised “tummy time” at least 2 times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally [§746.2427 and §747.2327].

Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant’s health care professional [§746.2428 and §747.2328].

## **SNACKS AND MEALTIMES**

We provide nutritious homemade snacks, breakfast, lunch, and dinner for your children. Please do not send additional food or snacks for your child since we do not accept foods from outside. If your child is allergic to or just really opposes a certain food, please let us know and we will try to accommodate them. A menu is posted on the bulletin board at the front. All meals are served cafeteria style.

- a) All liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach
- b) All staff are educated on food allergies and they take precautions to ensure children are protected.
- c) The days that we as provider serve meals, prepare food that is brought into the program to be shared among children is commercially prepared or prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials.
- d) Healthy snacks (as approved by the Texas Department of Agriculture) are available for school aged children as children arrive.
- e) Days that we as provider serve meals, milk, fresh fruit and vegetables are available for children who bring lunches from home.

Enclosed in your packet is a 1531 form for the Special Nutrition Program it is imperative that form is completed upon enrollment and returned to us. The Special Nutrition Program allows us to ensure that your child receives adequate nutrition. These forms are kept confidential.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

If you would like to bring treats for your child's birthday you are welcome to. Remember food brought to celebrate needs to be commercially brought. Please make sure to plan time with your child's teacher in advance. All special birthday treats need to be done at afternoon snack time. If you are having a party at home for your child and want to give out invitations at the center, you may only do so if every child in the class is invited. Small children do not understand why they are not being included. We also ask that no presents be brought to birthday celebrations at the center.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Children must receive all required immunizations prior to admission. Health records signed by a physician *must be* on file at the time the child is dropped off for their first day at the center. Immunizations can be waived under specific circumstances; a notarized statement from the Texas Department of Health is required in these circumstances. TB testing is not required by the county for children to attend Day Care. TB testing is not required by the county for children to attend Day Care neither for the teachers. However, we will require the TB test to teachers. All other immunizations recommended by the CDC will not need to be obtained.

## **HEARING AND VISION SCREENING**

All Children 4 years old and enrolled in a Licensed facility must have hearing and vision screenings on file at the center. If your child is currently 4 years old, we must have ibis at the time of admission. If your child will turn 4 at the center, at that time you must provide ibis information to the center. Most pediatricians do these screenings at 4 years well checks.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND PARENT REVIEW.**

All enrollment information must be completed before your child can begin at the center. After reading this handbook parents are encouraged to come by the office and ask any questions concerning our policies or procedures *before* their child's first day at the center. Policies and Procedures can be changed at any time. In the event there is a change in policy or procedures, parents will be notified in writing and they will always be posted in our webpage. Children with special needs will be considered on a case by case basis and will be accepted only if we are assured, we can fully meet the child's needs and the needs of the other children in the group with reasonable accommodation.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Little School House Learning Center will provide transportation for after school care, in certain elementary schools. All vehicles that are used for transportation will abide by the Minimum Standards set forth by the State regarding Transportation and Safety Standard.

## **WATER ACTIVITIES**

Little School House Learning Center doesn't have pools. However, in special occasions we will have events such as water balloons or sprinklers.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Off campus field trips will be arranged for children ages 2 and up only!! These field trips and any extra fees involved will be posted and announced at least one week prior to the scheduled event. We will abide by the Minimum Standards set forth by the State regarding Child/Staff Ratio and Safety Standard.

## **ANIMALS**

Little School House Learning Center doesn't have animals at the premises

## **REPELLANT AND SUNSCREEN**

There are sometimes when we feel sunscreen and mosquito repellent should be applied, the brands that teachers use are intended for children such as Fit Organic Mosquito Repellent and Goddess Garden Organics Sunny Kids, unless you send your preferred brand and label it with your child's name.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES / UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION**

Every organization must have rules and procedures to ensure that daily operation runs as smoothly as possible. The center is licensed by Texas Health and Human Services, there are state regulations that must be followed. Any family that fails to follow state regulations or center policies will be asked to withdraw their child/ren from the center.

### **ENROLLMENT:**

When your child is actually enrolled at Little School House Learning Center there will be many forms that have to be completed. Up to date Immunization records and a statement of good health must be provided to the center at the time of enrollment. Your child CAN NOT start until both of these items are on file. There is a box in the lobby where you can update your contact information such as; cell numbers, address, emergency phone numbers, anybody to pick up your child, etc. This is in the event that there is nobody available to assist you in this matter. All enrolled families must have a daytime phone number that is working. You **MUST PROVIDE TELEPHONE NUMBERS** that we can contact you or other authorized persons in case of sickness, injury or an emergency. Children must be picked up *immediately* when called by the center. Children that are still at the center 1 hour after calling the parent will be charged an additional fee of \$1 a minute after the allotted pickup time. When removing your child from the center's enrollment, you *must give 2-week written notice*. If a two-week written notice is not given you are still responsible for paying for those two weeks. I understand that my child may be photographed at the Daycare during normal daycare hours, field trips, or activities. I understand that these photographs may be used in promoting childcare services, either in print or on the Internet. With my signature below

I grant permission for my child to be photographed, or their images recorded for print or electronic use in promoting the Daycare's services. I understand that it is my responsibility to let the director know in the event that I no longer wish to authorize the above uses. I agree that this form will remain in effect during the term of my child's enrollment. I understand that there will be no payment for me or my child's participation in this release.

If at any given time parents have a question about our policies and procedures, they can always talk to the Director, and/or send us a message to set up an appointment until they get total clarification.

### **FAMILY PARTICIPATION**

Prospective clients will not be allowed free access to the children's areas (classrooms or playgrounds). If prospective parents want to see the children's areas, one of the administrative staff will give them a tour. If prospective parents decide they want to observe longer than the staff person has time, then staff may decide that the parents can remain in the classroom for a time once the initial introductions to the areas are completed. The most important thing is that strangers cannot just come into the center and have free access to the center and the children. Parents that have children enrolled in the center are welcome to drop by at any time during the day. There is no need for appointments. Prior approval to drop by the center is never needed if your child is enrolled in the center. If you decide to drop by at activity time, please be considerate not to disrupt what is going on in the classroom. All parents are invited to attend Holiday parties or special activities that may be held at the center.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:**

If you have a problem with your child's teacher, you should talk about it with the appropriate staff person. If this does not take care of the matter, it is then discussed with the director. NEVER discuss problems you have with another staff member. All problems with staff must be discussed with the director or assistant director. The Center is licensed through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. You may visit the website for Texas Health and Human Services at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us). You may contact TDFPS by phone by calling 956--316-8275. If you suspect Abuse or neglect of a child, you may contact the Child Abuse Hotline at 1800-252-5400. Parents can view a copy of the State Minimum Standards at any time in the office. Aside all inspection reports are posted in the front door of the office building for parental viewing.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

Circumstances that would make the center classes are as follows:

- No electricity for an extended period of time (over 2 hours)
- Phone service not available leaving us with any way to contact emergency services.
- Gas leak
- No water service at the center for an extended period of time.
- Bad weather such as icy roads, flooding etc. In bad weather situations Listen to the local news. If the PSJA ISD classes for bad weather, then the center is also closed. If PSJA ISD is not in school, the center will make the call whether to classes the center.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDELINES**

We have designed the Evacuation Plan, which you can find it on each classroom, being our relocation area: The San Juan Fire Department. We have designated the person in charge and how will we communicate during the emergency, what accommodations would be needed for our group, who will be helping the evacuation and how care givers and children will be transported to alternative site. We do this drill on a monthly basis.

- Evacuation procedures are posted on each classroom;
- Contact Emergency are electronically stored and accessible to Director or person in charge
- Accountability of children will be responsibility of person in charge.
- We will be contacting you as soon as we are in safe.
- NOTE: If you wish to see the entire Emergency Preparedness Plan, please let us know and we can email it to you.

## INFANT FEEDING / BREASTFEEDING EDUCATION

You must provide water, formula, milk and food for your child. It is preferred that you bring pre-filled bottles of formula or milk or pre-filled water bottles and formula in a can to the center. We do not have a problem feeding a baby breast milk if you bring it already in the bottles, you may also put some back up frozen bags in the freezer in the infant room in case your child runs out of milk. Be sure to label all items put into the freezer. Furthermore, you are welcome, and we will provide you a comfortable place with an adult size seat in our center that will enable you to breastfeed your child. Upon request, we can provide you with breastfeeding education and support resources, located in Infant's classroom & parent's corner community resources. In addition, you have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk while your child is in care.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION

Teachers are trained at least for 1 hour annually in Prevention, Recognition, and Reporting of Child Maltreatment. You can help prevent child abuse and neglect by using techniques to help you manage the responsibilities and stress related to parenting and daily life. Regardless of whether you are a parent, you can help children by showing concern for their well-being, volunteering when you are able, and being a general advocate for them.

There are four major types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

**Physical Abuse** is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

### Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

**Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

### Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

**Sexual Abuse** includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

### Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area

- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors or play
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children

**Emotional Abuse** is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems

If you are a parent or caregiver of children:

- Learn and use effective parenting and discipline techniques and avoid the use of corporal punishment. Parenting classes are offered in most communities. Ask your doctor or call a local hospital for more information.
- Learn healthy techniques to resolve conflicts and manage stress. For more information, see the topic Stress Management.
- Ask for help when you need it. Call a family member or friend to give you a break if you feel overwhelmed. Find out about community resources that are available to help you with childcare or other services you need. Call a doctor or local hospital for a place to start. Some communities have respite care facilities for children, which provide temporary childcare during times when you need a break.
- Get treatment if you have ever been a victim of abuse. Also seek help if you have problems with depression, alcohol or substance abuse, or violent behavior.
- Increase your knowledge of children's developmental stages. The normal pattern of crying in a newborn is a common trigger for shaken baby syndrome (also called intentional head injury). For more information, see the Growth and Development topics.
- Remove firearms and other dangerous weapons from your home.
- To help children in your community:
- Be aware of the children in your neighborhood. Learn their names and show basic concern for them, such as waving to them or asking about how they're doing at home and school.
- Relieve a friend, neighbor, or relative who is feeling overwhelmed with childcare and other issues.
- Learn to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect.
- Advocate for services to help at-risk families.
- Volunteer in child abuse programs.
- Know about organizations that can help such as; Mujeres Unidas, Children's Advocacy Center, Justice for Children.

**HEALTH POLICY: What happens if your child is ill or injured?**

- The daycare facility is not allowed to admit a child who seems to be sick unless a doctor or nurse gives approval in writing. This may cause problems for parents, but it is necessary to prevent a sick child from infecting other children.
- If your child has been absent because of a contagious illness, the day-care facility must follow guidelines, provided by the state, concerning when the child can return to day care.

- If your child appears seriously sick or injured while at the center, the caregiver must call you immediately. It's important that you pick up your child as soon' as possible.
- If your child needs immediate medical attention, the center must call your child's physician, take the child to the nearest emergency room or emergency clinic, or call for an ambulance. This is why the day-care facility must have your authorization for emergency medical care.
- Upon your child arriving at our daycare facility, we will conduct a physical health check. Any unusual observations will be documented and handled as stated on the daycare facility's procedures depending on the observation.

### **INCIDENCE OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

We will inform you of any communicable disease that may go through the center. We will post signs in a visible area that is easily seen by all. Names of the children with the disease are kept confidential.

### **GANG FREE ZONE**

As a result of House Bill 2086 effective we have the right to inform you that your child is attending to a Daycare which is located in a Gang free zone, that means that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of this center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

### **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

Little School House Learning Center Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, age or handicapped conditions.

### **FEE STRUCTURE/TUITION AND FEES / REFUND INFORMATION**

There will be a \$25 Return check fee on all Checks!!!! If at any time you have a check returned to the center, you must pay future tuition with cash or money order. The registration/deposits are due at the time your child is accepted and are nonrefundable. Tuition varies on age and program. Check with the office for current prices. Payments are due on a weekly basis every Monday for the following week. Late fees will be applied if paid Friday after 6:00 pm, there will be a \$20 late fee and \$5 for each additional day until tuition is paid. If payment is not paid by Wednesday enrollment will be terminated. Some parents choose to pay twice a month or once a month for parents that take this option the same grace period applies.

*Tuition WILL NOT be refunded for any reason under any circumstances.*

### **COLLECTIONS ON PAST DUE ACCOUNTS**

If you leave Little School House Learning Center with a past due account, the following procedures will be followed:

1. A certified letter will be mailed to your home notifying you of the past due account. Payment is due upon receipt of the letter.
2. If no payment is received, the account will be handled in one of two ways.
  - Your account will be referred to a collection agency to which collection fees of your outstanding balance may be added.
  - Your account will be turned over to small claims court for collection.

### **Tuition Contract and Parent Acknowledgment**

I have read and understand the Little School House Learning Center Policy Handbook, Especially and specifically the sections regarding: Attendance; Medications, Illnesses; Discipline; Tuition and Fees; NSF Checks, Late Payment Fees, Late Pick Up Fees; Misc. Fees; and Holidays. I understand that by signing this contract I also bound by Licensing contents. I agree to abide by these policies and pay my fees in a timely fashion. In the event that I do not abide by these policies, I understand that my child(ren) will not be able to attend this school and will be asked to leave. I understand that these fees are subject to change at the owner's discretion, although the owners will do their best to announce any changes at least 10 days prior to the implementation of them. These policies are to be reviewed annually and updated if necessary.