

# Little Munchkins Learning Center

*"Where learning and loving go hand and hand"*



## **Family Handbook**

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*"Growing little minds with big hearts"*

## **Welcome to Little Munchkins Learning Center**

Little Munchkin's goal is to be Central Texas' leading preschool program. Our program gives children aged 8-weeks through 10-years of age enrichment opportunities to develop the whole child. We focus on learning through child-directed play experiences and curriculum time. We believe a balance of play and preschool enhances growth and development in all areas: physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, and intellectually. This is achieved by providing a safe and loving faith-based environment with caregivers who are dedicated to enriching the lives of children.

### ***OUR MISSION***

We pledge to make the world a better place through young children,  
To love every child in our care,  
To educate children in all five areas of development:  
physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual,  
To build a solid reputation in the community for doing all the above

### ***OUR PHILOSOPHY***

LMLC offers a comprehensive value-based Christian learning program to the children in our community. Bible stories and songs, as well as prayer, are a daily part of our program.

We believe each child is unique and special with the potential to grow and learn. Our developmentally appropriate environment is designed to provide learning opportunities that encourage curiosity, creativity, and spontaneity. These experiences are extended and enhanced through the guidance of our staff.

As childcare professionals, we understand the importance of the formative early years of childhood. The valuable experiences and opportunities for first-time achievements that are presented to young children lay the foundation for higher learning.

It is our objective to create a happy, warm, and disciplined environment for our children. Therefore, we will strive to teach manners, fairness, courtesy, and respect for others, while remaining constantly alert to the well-being of every child in our care. Mutual respect between parents and teachers encourages regular communication, and a strong partnership for the benefit of every child. Exchanging ideas and sharing information is essential for family retention. Our 'open door' policy allows parents to drop in at any time.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:**

## Little Munchkins Family Handbook

Little Munchkin's does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to all children at the LMLC.

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### Required Policies

Little Munchkins Learning Center is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The following policies are required under the Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers (§746.501).

#### 1. Allergies

Any known **food or non-food allergy** must be reported to both management and staff. Parents/guardians must complete the required allergy form, which will be kept in the **medication log** located in the front office.

A **Food Allergy Emergency Plan** will be developed for each child with allergies. This plan will outline:

- Symptoms staff may observe during an allergic reaction
- Step-by-step emergency instructions specific to the child
- Emergency contacts and any prescribed medications (e.g., EpiPens)

EpiPens are stored in a **secure, easily accessible cabinet** for staff use in case of emergency. All staff receive **annual allergy response training** to remain updated on procedures and safety protocols.

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#### 2. Animals

Occasionally, Little Munchkins may host **classroom pets** that meet all health and safety requirements set forth by Texas Child Care Licensing.

When a pet is present, a notice will be shared with families in three ways:

- Posted outside the relevant classroom door
- Sent via **Procare**
- Sent by **email**

This ensures transparency and gives families the opportunity to communicate any concerns related to pet presence in the classroom.

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#### 3. Arrival and Departure of Children

In accordance with Texas law, parents/guardians have the right to **access their child at any time** during operating hours.

## Little Munchkins Family Handbook

To ensure children benefit from the full educational program, we encourage arrival by **8:30 AM** daily. A **9:00 AM cutoff time** remains in effect, originally established during the COVID-19 pandemic to support consistent staffing and ratio compliance.

### Authorized Pick-Up

- Children will **only be released** to adults listed as authorized on the child's **enrollment form**.
- Authorized adults **must present valid photo identification** at pick-up.
- Children will **not** be released to anyone **under the age of 18**.

### Procare App Check-In/Out

All guardians will be provided with access to the **Procare app**, which is required for checking children in and out each day. Please ensure you use the app **daily** to record attendance.

### Parking Lot Safety and Vehicle Idling Policy

To reduce exposure to **harmful exhaust fumes** that may enter our buildings and playgrounds—and to help prevent accidents—we ask that all parents and guardians **turn off their vehicles upon arrival**.

Little Munchkins is committed to reducing vehicle idling, including from our transportation vehicles (*Munchkin Buses*). The following idling limits are enforced:

- **Above 32°F** – Maximum idle time: **5 minutes**
- **20°F to 32°F** – Maximum idle time: **15 minutes**
- **Below 20°F** – Exceptions may be considered for warmth and safety

Families are expected to **turn off all vehicles** while parked in our lot.

### Parking Lot Safety Guidelines:

- **Do not leave children unattended** in parked vehicles at any time
- **Do not allow children to cross the parking lot alone**
- **Follow the flow of traffic**, which proceeds in a **circular pattern**
- **Do not back out to exit**—please drive around the loop for safety

For more details on expectations for families, please refer to **Section 36: Parent Responsibilities**.

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## 4. Birthdays and Holidays

We understand how special it is for children to celebrate **birthdays, holidays, and family milestones** with their preschool friends.

## Little Munchkins Family Handbook

Parents are welcome to bring a **store-bought treat** to share with the class. Please notify and coordinate with your child's teacher **several days in advance**.

### Important Guidelines:

- **No homemade baked goods** are allowed for classroom celebrations
- All items must be **store-bought and in original packaging**

This policy ensures food safety for all children in our care, especially those with food allergies or dietary restrictions.

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## 5. Biting

Biting is a **developmentally typical** behavior in young children, particularly among toddlers. Children may bite for various reasons including frustration, teething, or difficulty communicating.

Little Munchkins addresses biting through:

- **Open and consistent communication** between teachers and families
- **Observation and documentation** to identify patterns or triggers
- **Redirection and age-appropriate interventions**

We will work closely with parents/guardians to resolve persistent biting behaviors and ensure the safety of all children.

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## 6. Breastfeeding

Little Munchkins supports and encourages breastfeeding as part of our commitment to infant health and wellness.

We provide:

- A **comfortable, private space** for mothers who wish to breastfeed onsite
- **Safe storage for labeled breast milk or premade bottles**, located in refrigerators/freezers in each infant classroom

All breast milk and bottles must be:

- **Clearly labeled** with the child's **first and last name**
- **Dated** by the date the milk was expressed or prepared

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We also offer information on **local and national breastfeeding support programs**. Please see the front office for educational resources or additional support.

### 7. CAMERAS

Little Munchkin's has closed circuit cameras in all classrooms. Mr. Eddie (owner) & Ms. Crystal (director) are the only ones with access to view the cameras throughout the day. Parents may request to view previous footage from the Center Director. Footage expires after one (1) business day. The privacy of children is very important to us. For this reason, the cameras are not available over the internet.

### 8. CELL PHONES

Proper parent/guardian communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. **Effective December 1, 2010, the Minimum Standards for Childcare Centers-Texas Health & Human Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms for supervising adults. Please end all calls prior to entering the building for you to give the upmost attention to your child's teacher and your child.**

### 9. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW REQUIREMENTS

Little Munchkin's staff are **REQUIRED** by Texas State law and childcare licensing to report any instance when there is reason to **suspect** the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation immediately to the proper authorities. Our staff receive annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse. Little Munchkin's has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees and families through trainings, memos and monthly newsletters. Little Munchkin's will also coordinate with community organizations on strategies to prevent abuse and neglect.

The staff **will not** notify parent/guardians when police or CPS are called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, except on the recommendation of CPS and/or the police.

Some examples of abuse and neglect are:

- leaving a child in a vehicle unattended,
- not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat,
- unexplained marks or bruises on the body,
- child hygiene issues.

If an employee or family feels they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit [www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html](http://www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html)

The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

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### 10. CHILD TO STAFF RATIOS

Little Munchkin's exceeds state ratios in most classrooms. From time to time, we may follow state ratios, but will never be non-compliant unless under emergency situations.

## 11. Classroom Assignments

Classroom placements at Little Munchkins are determined by each child's chronological age, developmental milestones, emotional maturity, and physical growth. Transitions typically occur twice per year, though earlier transitions may be initiated at the discretion of the administrative team to support a child's individual needs.

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## 12. Clothing

Children must have a complete change of clothing at the center, clearly labeled with their name. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather and active play. In colder weather, children must arrive with caps, mittens, and warm outerwear to ensure they can participate in outdoor activities.

### Footwear Requirements:

- Closed-toe shoes are mandatory
- Sandals, flip-flops, open-toe shoes, and Crocs are not permitted

This policy ensures safety during indoor and outdoor play.

## Compliance History

Parents are encouraged to review Little Munchkins' compliance history with Child Care Licensing. Our most recent inspection report is displayed on the **Parent Communication Board**.

To view our compliance history online, visit:

[www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Search\\_Texas\\_Child\\_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp)

For additional information, contact the local licensing office at **214-583-4253**.

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## 14. Confidentiality

During your child's enrollment, you may encounter private information about other children, families, or staff. All such information must be **strictly confidential**. Any breach of confidentiality may result in immediate disenrollment from the program.



## 15. Curriculum

Little Munchkins implements the **Frog Street Press Curriculum** for all age groups, alongside the **Second Step Social-Emotional Curriculum**. These programs promote learning through hands-on experiences, real-life exploration, and structured play, fostering essential school-readiness skills.

Classroom environments are carefully designed to be developmentally appropriate and engaging, encouraging curiosity, discovery, and joy in learning.

For more information, visit:

- [www.highreach.com](http://www.highreach.com)
  - [www.fsp3.com](http://www.fsp3.com)
- 

### Screen Time Policy (per Minimum Standards §746.2207):

1. Children under age 3 are not permitted any screen time
2. Children age 3+ are limited to **30 minutes per week**
3. Screen time must align with the instructional lesson plan
4. All screen activities must be age-appropriate
5. Screen time includes use of **TVs, computers, tablets, and similar devices**

Special "In-House" movies may be shown **on Fridays only**, if listed on the calendar and rated **G or below**.

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## 16. Custody Situations

Little Munchkins must have a **court-issued custody agreement** on file to enforce any limitations on parent/guardian access or pick-up rights. Without legal documentation, both parents listed on the enrollment form will be assumed to have equal rights to the child.

It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent to provide:

- A copy of the most recent **custody order**
- Any **restraining orders** or special instructions

All documents must be updated as changes occur. We will not get involved in custody disputes but will follow legal orders as provided.

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## 17. Cyber Identity / Social Networking Websites

Parents, guardians, and staff are expected to protect the identity, privacy, and confidentiality of all children, families, and staff. Posting pictures or discussing classroom activities involving children other than your own on **social media or public websites** is strictly prohibited.

Employees and families are discouraged from connecting through social media unless there is an established relationship outside of LMLC.

## 18. Discipline and Guidance Policy

Little Munchkins follows guidance policies in accordance with **Texas Minimum Standards §746.2801**:

Staff will:

- Use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-control, self-direction, and self-esteem
- Redirect behaviors using age-appropriate language and strategies
- Set clear, consistent rules and expectations
- Model appropriate behavior

**Prohibited methods include:**

- Corporal punishment or threats
- Humiliating, shaming, or yelling at a child
- Withholding food, rest, or bathroom access
- Isolation without supervision

A full copy of our discipline policy is provided during enrollment and posted in every classroom.

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## 19. Emergency Preparedness Plan

Little Munchkins maintains a comprehensive **Emergency Preparedness Plan** addressing various emergency scenarios. Parents should review the following protocols carefully. If a parent is present during an emergency, they may be asked to assist.

**General Instructions:**

Remain calm. Ask how many children are present and how you may help.

In this plan, "Director" refers to Crystal. In her absence, Eddie and/or Brenda will assume the role of Director. The Director or their designee may delegate responsibilities as needed and will notify Licensing, the Health Department, or 911 depending on the situation.

### **Tornado/Bad Weather**

- Teachers bring emergency backpacks, flashlights, tablets, and books
- Children are moved to the large activity room and told to sit closely with hands over their heads
- Infants are placed in cribs, covered with crib mattresses, and wheeled to the activity room
- The Director monitors weather alerts and notifies staff when it's safe to return

### **Communicable Disease Outbreak**

- Staff strictly follow hygiene and sanitization procedures
  - Director notifies Licensing and the Health Department
  - Parents are notified in writing within 48 hours per licensing standards
- 

### **Lockdown (Intruder, Hostage, Disturbance)**

- Director announces "Lockdown" or code phrase and calls 911
  - Teachers use classroom code phrase, e.g., "Rabbits in the Hole,"
  - Lights off, doors locked, windows covered
  - Infants placed quietly into cribs, other cribs block doors
  - Teachers keep children quiet and away from windows
- 

### **Accident**

- Stay calm, supervise all children
  - Apply first aid as needed
  - Notify Director and complete an incident report
  - Call 911 for serious injuries
  - Head injuries must be reported to the office and guardians immediately
- 

### **Illness**

- Ask the child how they feel and check for symptoms
  - Contact office for temperature check
  - Fever over 100°F = parent contacted
  - Monitor and comfort child with no fever
  - Notify office after second episode of vomiting or diarrhea
-

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### Explosion, Chemical Spill, or Gas Leak

#### Inside the facility:

- Follow fire and off-site evacuation protocols

#### Outside the facility:

- Lock doors and turn off HVAC
  - Shut down electronics to avoid sparks
  - Keep children calm and on the floor
  - Be prepared to evacuate if instructed
  - If strong odor detected, teach children to breathe through shirts
  - Crawl during evacuation to avoid fumes
- 

#### Bomb Threat or Other Threat

- Record all relevant details of the threat
  - Ask where and when the threat is expected to occur
  - Notify 911 immediately
- 

#### Off-Site Evacuation and Relocation

- Teachers gather emergency supplies, including diaper bags if time allows
  - Children evacuated by center buses, oldest to youngest
  - Director oversees the evacuation and is last to leave
  - Designated staff member brings emergency binder and medication
  - Relocation site: **Crestview Baptist Church, 7600 Woodrow Ave., Austin, TX 78757**
  - Parents are contacted once relocation is complete
  - Standard pick-up protocols remain in effect
- 

#### Fire

- Teacher calmly initiates evacuation: "Fire drill boys and girls; line up at the door, please"
- Teachers bring emergency bags, binders, and flashlights
- Infants placed in evacuation cribs
- Evacuate via assigned exits
- Name-to-face checks performed outside

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- Re-entry permitted only by the fire department or Director

### Vehicle Emergency Procedures

- Pull over to a safe location, engage brake, and turn on hazard lights
  - Contact administration immediately
  - Ensure children's safety and administer first aid as needed
  - Never leave children unattended
  - Await approved assistance; do not accept help from strangers
  - Do not perform vehicle maintenance with children onboard
- 

### Vehicle Accidents

- Prioritize care and support for children
  - Call 911 if injuries occur
  - Share emergency medical forms with responders
  - Gather contact info for all parties and witnesses
  - Do not admit fault or make agreements
  - Notify licensing if injuries occur
  - Contact parents/guardians immediately
- 

## 20. Enrollment Procedures

Upon selecting Little Munchkin's to meet your child's educational needs, all enrollment paperwork is required before the child can start our program. Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted. Paperwork required for enrollment includes:

- Enrollment Form
- Health Form (INITIALED medication)
- Authorization form (circle 1-4)
- Discipline and Guidance Policy
- Operational Policies
- Physician's Statement with signature (must be licensed in the state of Texas)
- Immunization Policy
- Tuition Agreement
- Tuition Express Form (ACH Draft)

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- Food Program Enrollment Form
- CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form
- Infant Feeding Preference (if applicable)
- Food Allergy Form
- Allergy Information Form
- What Makes My Child Special
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- Medication Policy
- COVID Policy (while applicable)
- Current shot record
- Orientation Form

Guardians will be notified within 30 days of any policy change in writing. Signatures from guardians will be required.

Guardians who need to update information can message the director through the Procure app or email the director at [crystal@littlemunchkin.com](mailto:crystal@littlemunchkin.com).

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## 21. Food Service & Preparation

Little Munchkin's is a participant of the USDA's Special Nutrition Program. We do not charge an extra fee for meals or snacks. Per Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to the USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272.

### Little Munchkins follows all guidelines from the USDA:

- Ensure safe meal practices (liquids & foods hotter than 110 degrees are kept out of reach of children)
- Staff receive yearly training on food allergies & precautions
- Food is prepared in a kitchen inspected by local health officials
- Munchkins supplies healthy food options
- Menus are posted on the front information board, and shared via the Procure app, Munchkins website, and social media. Extra copies are available in the front hallway.

### Infant Meal Services:

- LMLC provides cereal and iron-fortified formula for infants
- Parents complete an Infant Care Sheet and Infant Care Instruction Form monthly (due by the 1st). Missing forms may result in exclusion until completed

### Meal Schedule:

- Breakfast: 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM (ends promptly at 8:30)
- Lunch: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Afternoon Snack: ~2:30 PM

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- School-Age Snack: ~4:00 PM

Please advise the center of any allergies. **All shared treats must be store-bought.**

### Little Munchkin's is a Nut-Free School.

If a child requires a food or milk substitution, an allergy form **signed by a Texas-licensed physician** must be submitted. The form must include a recommended substitution.

Allergy forms with the child's photo will be posted:

- In the child's classroom
  - In adjacent classrooms
  - In the kitchen
- 

## 22. Gang-Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty. **Little Munchkin's is a GANG-FREE ZONE.**

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## 23. Hours of Operation / Holiday Schedule

Little Munchkin's is open from **7:00 AM – 6:00 PM, Monday–Friday**, year-round.

We observe the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve and Day
- MLK Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the Friday after
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

**Full tuition is due for holiday weeks and family vacation days.**

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Note: If a holiday falls on a weekend, we may close the day before or after. Parents will receive the updated holiday schedule each January.

### 24. Illness and Exclusion Policy

Children who are ill should not attend preschool. Little Munchkin's follows the exclusion standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Common reasons for exclusion:

1. Child is too ill to participate in group activities, including outdoor play
  2. Child requires more care than staff can provide without compromising the care of others
  3. Temperature (under arm) of 100.4°F or higher
  4. Symptoms of severe illness (e.g., lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea, or vomiting)
- Child will be sent home if they have **two episodes of diarrhea** at the center or one that is not contained
  - Child will be sent home after **two vomiting episodes within 24 hours**

If a child becomes ill during care:

- The parent/guardian will be contacted immediately
- The child will be cared for in isolation with supervision
- **Parents must pick up the child within 1 hour of notification**

In severe cases or if parents are unavailable, **emergency services may be contacted at the parent's expense.**

**If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return until the child is symptom-free for 72 hours WITHOUT any fever-reducing medication, and Dr.'s note.**

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### 25. Immunization Requirements

Immunization records must be kept current for all children enrolled in Infant, Toddler, Preschool, and Pre-K programs. An updated copy must always be on file. It is the **parent/guardian's responsibility** to ensure records are up to date. **Failure to comply may result in disenrollment.**

If your child is exempt due to personal beliefs, a **notarized affidavit** must be provided and updated every two years.



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Parents should also review the **Employee Immunization Policy** in accordance with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services guidelines.

## 26. Inclement Weather Policies

Little Munchkin's generally remains open during inclement weather. LMLC follows **AISD's closure/delay schedule**.

For timely updates:

- Follow us on **Facebook**
- Ensure **Procare notifications** are enabled and not filtered to junk/spam

**Full tuition remains due during weather-related closures.**

In emergencies (e.g., earthquake, fire, power outage), LMLC will notify families if possible. Children will be supervised until a parent/authorized emergency contact arrives.

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## 27. Medication

Parents are encouraged to administer medications at home whenever possible. If medications must be given during school hours, the following conditions apply:

### General Guidelines:

- Only **trained staff** may administer medication
- All medications must be **stored securely** in a locked container (**ALL MEDICATION IS KEPT IN THE OFFICE**)
- Parent/Guardian are required to complete an **Authorization to Administer Medication** form (located by the front door)

### Prescription Medication:

- Must be in the **original pharmacy container** with:
  - Child's legal name
  - Physician's name (licensed in Texas)
  - Dosage and time instructions

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- **Initial dose must be given at home**, unless authorized by a physician for life-threatening conditions (e.g., EpiPen)
- **Medication must be unexpired**

### Non-Prescription Medication:

- Must be in the **original packaging** with manufacturer's instructions
- May only be given for **2 weeks**; a physician's note is required after 2 weeks

### Required Authorization Form Must Include:

- Child's legal name and DOB
- Name of medication
- Dosage and administration times
- Dates to be given
- Parent/guardian's signature

### Special Applications:

- **Insect Repellent & Sunscreen:** Must include permission slip
  - First application must be made by the parent **before arrival**
  - Second application will be applied by staff
  - Must follow the same medication guidelines listed above

### Medical Devices (e.g., Nebulizers, EpiPens):

- Annual training provided for staff
- Written instructions from a **licensed Texas health care professional** are required
- Demonstration of device use must be completed by parent or health professional

### Medication Administration Log:

- Medication name
- Time/date given
- Administering staff signature/initials

**Health forms** must include allergy information, physical conditions, general health statement, and immunization records. These must be current and updated as needed.

See the detailed **Medication Policy** at the back of this handbook for full compliance requirements.

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## 28. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILDCARE CENTERS

## Little Munchkins Family Handbook

Little Munchkins Learning Center is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and fully adheres to the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Parents may review a copy of these standards at our front office or online at

[www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Child\\_Care\\_Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp).

## 29. NAPTIME

Naptime is a supervised period designated for children to rest and for teachers to use their break time for personal lunch and planning. Teachers assigned to nap rooms must maintain vigilant supervision throughout this time. Planning activities may include preparing lessons or organizing the classroom.

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### Safe Sleep Procedures

#### Infants:

- Infants must be placed on their backs unless they can independently roll over. Each infant will have an assigned, labeled crib indicating their ability to roll over.
- Crib sheets and mattresses must fit snugly with no gaps. No objects such as blankets, stuffed animals, or pillows are permitted inside cribs. Swaddling is prohibited in the childcare setting.
- Parents may provide a sleep sack that allows free arm movement. Pacifiers are allowed but must be free of attachments.
- Teachers must remain active and regularly check on sleeping infants throughout naptime.

#### Toddlers and Older Children:

- Each child is assigned a nap mat. Parents may provide a pillow and/or blanket, but blankets must never cover a child's face. Mats are sanitized daily.
- Parents are encouraged to supply a clean blanket and playpen sheet for naptime, which will be sent home weekly for washing unless soiled sooner. Special comfort items (blanket, pillow, stuffed animal) are allowed only if they fit inside the child's cubby.
- Nap mats must be spaced at least two feet apart for safe walking paths, and emergency exits must remain clear.
- Lighting may be dimmed but must allow teachers to clearly see every child without difficulty.
- Supervised rest is provided for all children under five who attend six or more hours daily, and for any older child who needs rest.

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**Important:** Infants (1 year and younger) are **not permitted** to have any items inside their cribs or on their person during sleep (including blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, swaddles, or sleep sacks). Exceptions require a physician's note explaining the necessity.

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### 30. OPEN DOOR POLICY

We welcome parents at any time and in any area of the center. As a privately owned facility, Little Munchkins reserves the right to refuse service to anyone at any time.

### 31. OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

Outdoor play is an essential, daily part of our program, promoting numerous health and developmental benefits, including stronger muscles and bones, improved self-esteem, reduced anxiety, and enhanced academic and cognitive performance.

#### Infants:

- Will have opportunities for supervised tummy time and outdoor play, weather permitting.

#### Physical Activity Requirements:

- **Toddlers (13–33 months):** Minimum 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play daily.
- **Preschool & Pre-K (34 months–5 years):** Minimum 90 minutes daily.
- **School-age children (full day attendance):** Minimum 90 minutes daily.
- **School-age children (after-school only):** Minimum 30 minutes daily.

Active play may coincide with outdoor play when weather permits. Children engage in running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, enhancing gross and fine motor skills.

#### Health Policy:

Children too ill to participate in outdoor play should remain at home, as per Texas Minimum Standards. Maintaining proper staff-to-child ratios requires all children to participate in playtime.

#### Appropriate Clothing and Footwear:

- Gym shoes or sturdy shoes (no flip flops or sandals)
- Weather-appropriate clothing such as lightweight jackets without hoods or neck strings, shorts or pants, and short or long sleeve shirts
- Girls wearing dresses must wear shorts or bloomers underneath

#### Inappropriate Clothing and Footwear:

- Shoes likely to slip off or lack support for climbing
- Flip flops or sandals

## Little Munchkins Family Handbook

- Clothing with drawstrings or loops that can catch on equipment
- 

### 32. Outside Employment

- Employees of Little Munchkins Learning Center are **not permitted** to engage in outside employment with parents of enrolled children.
- This includes babysitting, nanny services, or any similar jobs.

### 33. Parent Code of Conduct

- Little Munchkins prohibits **swearing or cursing** anywhere on the premises to protect young children from inappropriate language.
  - **Threatening behavior** toward staff, children, or other parents will **not be tolerated** and may lead to termination of care.
  - All adults must comply with Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers regarding discipline and conduct while on site.
- 

### 34. Family Notifications

Open communication is vital to your child's success. Little Munchkins uses multiple methods to keep parents informed, including:

- Email notifications
- Written memos in your child's weekly folder
- Updates on social media (Facebook and our website)
- Notifications via the Procure app

At times, families may be asked to sign documents confirming receipt of important information.

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### 35. Parent Referrals

- If you refer a family who enrolls a child and stays enrolled for **90 days**, you will receive a **credit equal to one week's tuition** applied to your account.

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- The referred family must name you on their initial visit form.
  - Thank you for being our greatest source of new families!
- 

### 36. Parent Responsibilities

#### Signing In and Out

- Children must be signed in and out by a parent or guardian.
- A \$5 fee may be charged for each missed sign-in or sign-out.
- Staff are not permitted to take children home.

#### Personal Items

- Please **do not** send toys from home, except:
  - A stuffed animal for full-day preschool nap time.
  - Show & Tell items as directed by teachers.
- Little Munchkins is not responsible for lost or damaged personal belongings.

#### Communication & Participation

- Share any concerns with staff promptly.
- Check and read notices in folders, posted classroom information, reception, or emails.
- Collect your child's daily work and projects to stay connected.

#### Mealtimes

- Breakfast: 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM (strictly no late arrivals).
- Lunch: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM.
- Arrive on time to avoid mealtime disruptions.

#### Food and Candy

- No gum or candy allowed.
- Encourage your child to eat provided meals unless medically restricted (doctor's note required).
- Food from home is served only at scheduled mealtimes and must be taken home afterward.

#### Clothing

- Regularly check your child's extra clothing supply and remove soiled items promptly.

#### Smoking

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- Smoking is prohibited anywhere on premises, indoors or outdoors.

### Diapers/Pull-Ups

- Ensure your child arrives wearing a clean diaper or pull-up.
  - The classroom changing table is available for morning changes to help teachers focus on other tasks
- 

## 37. Parent/Family Participation

- Little Munchkins is committed to building positive relationships with all families without discrimination.
  - Family participation is highly encouraged; parents are welcome to visit their child at any time.
  - We recognize that families are their child's first teachers, so regular communication between parents and teachers, whether face-to-face, by phone, or email—is essential.
  - A monthly activity calendar invites families to special events throughout the school year. Our goal is to make all families feel welcome and appreciated.
  - If a family has specific care instructions outside of our standard procedures, must be submitted **in writing** to both the teacher and the director.
  - For concerns, questions, or suggestions:
    - Please first discuss directly with your child's teacher.
    - If unresolved, bring your concerns to the director.
- 

## 38. Personal Belongings

- **Labeling:** **All items must be labeled with your child's full name**, including bottles, breastmilk bags, sippy cups, and pacifiers.
  - **Diapers/Pull-Ups:** **Parents must supply all diapers or pull-ups**, preferably with side straps for easier handling during potty training. Any brand is acceptable.
  - **Wipes:** We provide **Huggies Unscented** or **Pampers Unscented** wipes as community wipes. Parents must supply a **monthly supply of wipes (3 small packs or 1 large pack)**. If your child cannot use these brands, please provide an alternative that suits your child. **Open packages will not be accepted.**
  - **Failure to provide wipes, diapers, or pull-ups on a monthly basis may result in temporary suspension or termination of childcare services until all required supplies are replenished. All items must be age-appropriate and meet center guidelines.**
  - **Clothing:** We use washable art supplies, but children's clothing may still get stained. Please dress your child in play clothes suitable for active, messy play.
  - **Extra clothing is required for accidents—please label all clothing.**
  - Please leave valuables at home, as Little Munchkins cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal items such as jewelry or toys.
- 

## 39. Photographs

Little Munchkins Family Handbook

- Little Munchkins uses school-owned cameras to take photos of children solely for educational purposes within our program.
- Parents may photograph their own child during events but must obtain **written permission** from other parents before photographing other children.
- During certain events (e.g., Pre-K graduation, Christmas programs), photos may be taken by the center.
- If you do **not** want your child photographed, you may choose to keep them home during these events.

40. Questions/Concerns

- We encourage open communication between parents, teachers, and the Center Director to ensure all parties work as partners in your child’s education.
- The Center Director may complete a Parent Concern Form as needed; parents will receive a copy with outcomes.
- Parents are welcome to request conferences with teachers and/or the Director at any time.

41. Sample Daily Schedule

Our classrooms follow a flexible daily schedule tailored to children’s developmental, social, emotional, and personal needs. Below is a typical day sample:

| Time           | Activity                                              |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:00–7:30 AM   | Arrival / Child-Centered Activities                   |
| 7:30–8:30 AM   | Breakfast / Wash Up / Assigned Centers                |
| 8:30–9:00 AM   | Transition to Classrooms                              |
| 9:00–9:15 AM   | Group Circle / Story Time / Bible Lesson              |
| 9:15–9:45 AM   | Literacy Lesson and Centers (rotating groups)         |
| 9:45–10:15 AM  | Gross Motor Activities                                |
| 10:15–10:30 AM | Social and Emotional Development                      |
| 10:30–11:30 AM | Math and Science Lesson and Centers (rotating groups) |
| 11:00–11:30 AM | Family Style Dining                                   |
| 11:30–12:00 PM | Restroom / Transition to Nap Time                     |
| 12:00–2:00 PM  | Nap Time                                              |
| 2:00–3:00 PM   | Snack / Outside Play / Centers                        |



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| Time         | Activity                                          |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 3:00–3:20 PM | Circle Time (Lesson Review)                       |
| 3:20–4:00 PM | Alphabet, Counting, and Centers (rotating groups) |
| 4:00–4:30 PM | Outdoor Learning                                  |
| 4:30–5:00 PM | Transition to End of Day Activities               |
| 5:00–5:30 PM | Art Activities                                    |
| 5:30–6:00 PM | Closing Activity                                  |

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## 42. School Safety Policies

- Parents/guardians must escort children to their assigned classrooms and sign in/out on the front desk tablet.
- Classroom windows allow hallway viewing; parents may visit anytime without prior notice.
- To stay and participate during activities, a criminal history check is required (per Texas Minimum Standards).
- Parents will be notified of incidents beyond minor scrapes or bumps by phone and receive a written report to sign at pick-up. Medical attention will be sought immediately if necessary; medical fees are the parents' responsibility.

### Monthly safety drills include:

- Fire drills
  - Severe weather drills
  - Tornado drills
  - Regular equipment and facility checks are conducted. Staff are trained for lockdown procedures tailored to each classroom.
  - Smoking (including e-cigarettes and vaporizers) is prohibited anywhere on the premises, playground, transport vehicles, and field trips (per Texas Minimum Standards §746.3703(d)).
  - Firearms or weapons are prohibited unless carried by certified Peace Officers or licensed security officers (§746.3707).
  - Persons under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances (without prescription) are prohibited on premises (§746.3703(b-c)).
- 

## 43. Screenings

### Health Screening:

- Hearing and vision screenings are required for children aged 4–5 under the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code Chapter 36.
- Parents may submit proof of screening from their pediatrician.

### Daily Health Screening:

- Teachers complete health checks on arrival, noting scrapes, bumps, temperature, and behavior.

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- Children showing illness will be sent home immediately while parents are present.

### Developmental Screening:

- Available upon request. Little Munchkins partners with ABA Behavioral Innovation & SOAL-Speech for evaluations.
- The center may also refer children for screening as needed, with evaluations conducted onsite and parent follow-up.

## 44. Social Media

- Social media includes all online communication, posting, and sharing of content (blogs, websites, social networking sites, chat rooms, etc.).
- Staff must follow all Little Munchkins policies online as they do onsite.
- Employees **may not** accept or request online friendships with current families, unless the relationship existed prior to employment or enrollment (proof may be requested).
- Use of social media during work hours or on LMLC equipment is prohibited unless authorized by the Director for work purposes.
- Parents may opt out of having their child's photos posted on LMLC social media by marking the appropriate section on the authorization form.

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## 45. Suspension and Expulsion Policy

- Little Munchkins strives to support all children, referring families for outside services (therapies, etc.) as needed.
- Written documentation will be provided for referrals based on behavior, delays, or disabilities.
- Reasonable accommodations are made according to federal and state laws, but LMLC is not required to fundamentally alter services for children with dangerous/inappropriate behaviors or disabilities.
- Outside providers may work onsite if cleared and compliant with policies, and if they safely manage the child's behavior.
- Sessions disruptive to the program or failing to control dangerous behavior may lead to child exclusion.
- Children posing safety threats may face suspension or disenrollment. Temporary suspension may be used to secure evaluations or services.
- LMLC will communicate behavioral concerns via multiple methods and hold conferences with parents. If behavior does not improve, the child cannot return until support is in place.

## **46. Teacher Conferences**

- Parents may request conferences via the Director to schedule a mutually convenient time.
  - Alternatively, parents may sign up during two scheduled conference periods annually (beginning and end of school year).
- 

## **47. Teacher Training Guidelines**

- Texas DFPS requires staff to complete a minimum of 24 hours of training annually.
- To maintain Four Star Texas Rising Star Provider status, LMLC requires 30 hours annually. This is mandatory.

### **Training Standards:**

- Director: Minimum 36 hours annually in early childhood and program leadership topics.
- Onsite supervisors: Minimum 36 hours annually in early childhood and supervision.
- Staff counted in ratios: Minimum 30 hours annually, including age-group specific topics.

### **Training Content:**

- Focus on child development, teacher-child interactions, social-emotional growth, curriculum, classroom management, and responsive caregiving.
- Training should match staff roles and age groups served.
- Staff meetings may include training, but only actual training time counts toward hours.

### **Documentation:**

- Training logs must be maintained for two years, including certificates or proof of attendance.
  - College courses in Child Development/Early Childhood Education count toward training hours. Degrees outside this field must include 12+ hours in CD/ECE.
  - Include descriptions and acronyms on training documentation.
  - In-house trainings require agendas, summaries, and attendance sheets.
- 

## **48. Toilet Training Procedures**

- Toilet training success depends on child readiness, usually starting between 18 months and 3 years.
- Forcing training prematurely causes stress and delays progress.
- Toilet training involves multiple steps: pulling pants down/up, using the toilet correctly, cleaning, flushing, and handwashing.

## Little Munchkins Family Handbook

- Staff collaborate with parents to create individualized training plans and communicate progress regularly.
- Visual and verbal cues assist children throughout the process.
- Children may only wear their own clothing; borrowing is not allowed.
- If a child lacks extra clothes, parents will be contacted to provide them.
- Diaper changes occur only on approved changing tables, with safety straps and PPE followed.
- Staff must wash children's hands after every diaper change.
- All staff are CPR and First Aid certified and must maintain the required training hours annually to remain employed.

## 49. Transportation

### Scope:

School-age children will be transported from public/charter schools and during summer field trips. Little Munchkin's does **not** transport children under age 5, except in emergency situations.

### State Law Requirements:

- Vehicles must be in safe operating condition with current Texas Driver's License holders as drivers.
- Vehicles are inspected by licensed professionals; inspection certificates are maintained.
- Children are loaded and unloaded curbside or in protected parking areas.
- Children may only attend field trips with a signed parent/guardian permission form.
- Children will **not** ride in the front seat of company vehicles.
- No child is ever left unattended in a vehicle.
- Everyone in the vehicle must use a properly fitting safety belt per Texas Minimum Standards §746.5607.

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### First Aid Kit Requirements:

Each vehicle must carry a first-aid kit containing:

- Guide to first aid and emergency care
- Adhesive tape
- Antiseptic solution and/or wipes
- Cotton balls
- Multi-size adhesive bandages
- Scissors

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- Sterile gauze pads
- Thermometer
- Tweezers
- Waterproof disposable gloves

*Note: The first-aid kit is checked monthly for completeness and expiration by administrators.*

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### Driver Requirements:

- Must be at least 21 years old
- Must hold a valid Texas Driver's License
- Must be familiar with fire extinguisher use

### Driving Rules:

- Smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs, or impairing medications are prohibited while driving.
  - Smoking is not allowed inside program-owned vehicles at any time.
  - Drivers should avoid backing up to reduce accident risk.
  - Stick strictly to assigned routes; notify the program immediately of detours.
  - Use of mobile phones or devices while driving is prohibited; pull over safely if a call is needed.
  - Maintain a 4-second following distance and check mirrors every 30 seconds.
  - Always stop and look both ways at uncontrolled intersections.
  - At green lights, allow the full length of your vehicle to clear the intersection before proceeding.
  - If brakes fail, pump brakes to build pressure.
  - If the accelerator sticks, do not attempt to fix it while driving.
  - Avoid wearing sandals or flip-flops while driving.
  - In hydroplaning, ease off gas pedal and maintain steering; avoid braking.
  - Always walk around the vehicle before moving to check for obstacles.
  - Each vehicle must have an emergency notebook and at least one fire extinguisher; both are checked monthly.
  - Drivers must pass a written driving test and an annual driving evaluation with the program director before transporting children.
- 

### Field Trip Procedures:

- A preplanning form must be submitted to the Director detailing:
  - Trip purpose
  - Supervising employees

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- Site contact info
- Employee contact info
- Guardians will be notified at least 48 hours prior to trips with:
  - Departure and return times
  - Destination
  - Staff list and contact info
- Signed permission forms are required for all children before trips.
- Safety rules for transportation and destinations are reviewed with children; bus rules are posted.
- Name-to-Face checklists are used frequently while away from the center.
- Children wear center identification (e.g., Little Munchkins t-shirts or bracelets).
- **Parents are not permitted to pick up or drop off children at field trip locations.**
- CPR and First Aid certified staff accompany all trips.
- Everyone must wear seat belts during transport.
- Drivers carry a cellular phone (not used while driving).
- See the Emergency Preparedness Plan for transportation emergencies.

### Additional Notes:

- School-age summer camp often includes weekly field trips following these policies.
- All transportation, including trips, mileage, and vehicle condition, is logged and maintained.
- Vehicle maintenance records are retained by the owner/director for inspections.

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## 50. Tuberculosis (TB) Testing Requirements

Based on local health department guidelines, proof of TB testing is **not** required for enrollment in our program.

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## 51. Tuition and Fees

### Payment Methods:

- ACH draft via Tuition Express
- Cash
- Check
- Debit/Credit Card
- Venmo
- Cash App

All accounts must be set up on Procare.

### Payment Policies:

- Checks must be received **prior to 6:00 AM on Monday** to avoid an automatic draft.
- Drafts cannot be turned “on” or “off” at will.
- Returned drafts or checks due to insufficient funds (NSF) will incur a \$35 fee.
- A \$30 per day late fee will be added for all unpaid balances, beginning the day after tuition is due.

### Additional Fees:

- A one-time non-refundable registration fee is due upon enrollment.
- During summer months and holidays, an **activity fee** may be charged for extra activities outside the standard curriculum. Parents will receive notification at least 30 days in advance.
- A **late pick-up fee of \$3 per minute** will be charged if a child is picked up after 6:00 PM. This fee must be paid directly to the director by the end of that week via cash, Venmo, Cash App, or Apple Pay. Late fees are **not** paid to the center but to the staff who wait after hours.

## 52. Water Activities and Swimming Pool

School-age children will have access to the swimming pool located at Little Walnut Creek Pool during summer months. A certified lifeguard will always be on duty. Parents will be notified in advance about swimming and other water-related activities.

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## 53. Well Checks

Staff conduct a visual wellness check of each child upon arrival every morning. Any unusual findings—such as rashes, swelling, bruises, complaints of pain, or unusual behavior—will be documented and communicated to the parent/guardian during drop-off. Please notify staff if your child has had any overnight accidents or health concerns so we can monitor them throughout the day.

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## 54. Withdrawal / Dismissal Procedure

A **30-day written notice** is required to withdraw a child from Little Munchkin’s. Failure to provide this notice allows Little Munchkin’s to draft tuition payment for the remaining 30 days from the family’s bank account. Little Munchkin’s reserves the right to refuse service to any family for any reason. No refunds will be issued.

**“Where learning and loving go hand in hand.”**

At **Little Munchkin’s**, we know you trust us with your most valuable treasure, your child. That’s a responsibility we don’t take lightly. We are committed to providing your family with the absolute best in preschool education and childcare.

We believe that **excellent early childhood development** forms the foundation for a bright future. Our goal is to nurture the whole child—socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually—within a safe, loving, and faith-based environment.

We also recognize that **family involvement** plays a critical role in a child’s growth and development. With more children than ever attending preschool and full-day kindergarten, it is essential that educators and families work together. Research consistently shows that when families are engaged, children thrive.

Federal, state, and local institutions are encouraging the use of **research-based practices** to improve how educators engage with families. At Little Munchkin’s, we take this to heart. Our team builds meaningful relationships with parents and guardians to foster an environment of open communication, shared goals, and collaborative learning.

**Successful early childhood education** is not just about curriculum—it’s about community. At Little Munchkin’s, we’re proud to partner with you in preparing your child for a lifetime of learning and success.



**Little Munchkins Learning Center**  
**2020 Denton Drive~~Austin, TX 78758**

**Parent Acknowledgement Form**

I, the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of **Little Munchkins Learning Center's Family Handbook**.

I understand that it is my responsibility to comply with all policies and procedures outlined in the handbook, as well as any revisions that may be made. I further agree that continued enrollment at Little Munchkins Learning Center following any updates to the handbook will constitute my acceptance of the updated terms.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to be familiar with the contents of the Family Handbook and to seek clarification from the Center Director for any questions I may have.

I accept and understand that my child's enrollment at Little Munchkins Learning Center is **at-will**, meaning either the Center or I may terminate the enrollment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with all the policies and procedures contained in the Family Handbook.

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_