Little Learners Children's Center

130 Gallup Hill Road
Ledyard, CT 06339

Phone: (860) 572-4411

Parent Handbook

Revised May 2024

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Little Learners Children's Center is "To provide a safe and nurturing environment where children learn, grow and thrive."

PHILOSOPHY

Little Learners is committed to providing the highest level of safety, care and cognitive development. As caregivers, we ensure the health and safety of all children in our care by providing individual personalized responsive care and affection for each child. We believe that children should learn through their own discovery. Our classrooms are child centered and use hands on activities, discussion, and critical thinking to develop knowledge. Learning will be inquiry based allowing children to connect their learning to the real world. Activities will incorporate multiple intelligences through manipulative items, books, music, and more. We acknowledge that all children learn differently and may need accommodations and modifications. A safe, nurturing, positive environment will be created through a commitment to continued education and a culture of open minded thinking that provides developmentally appropriate learning strategies and to respect all people who enter our facility.

PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

We at **Little Learners** will try to accommodate the children in order to best facilitate new skills and spend their day in a safe and nurturing environment. We also encourage parental involvement. **Little Learners** maintains an open-door policy. Parents are always welcome. Drop-in visits are more than welcome and parents can feel free to arrange conferences at any time. We feel that open lines of communication and lots of parental involvement are essential to the well-being and development of each child in our care. It is only through the interaction of parent and provider that the goal of quality and nurturing care can be achieved.

Keeping parents informed of the activities at our center is important to us. Please be sure to check smartcare throughout and at the end of the day to be aware of the happenings of your child's classroom. We also send out newsletters as well as email reminders and updates.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Employees of Little Learners and families enrolled should not be communicating or connected via Social Media. Unless you are related or were connected to them prior to employment or the family's enrollment, you should not be "Friends" on social media sites including but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc..

ENROLLMENT

Upon enrollment, parents/guardians must fully complete, initial and sign the enrollment form. The enrollment form should include the hours that the child/ren will attend. Weekly tuition will be based on these hours. In addition staff members will be scheduled according to this form so parents must request a change in hours if necessary, in writing at least two weeks in advance.

Each child entering the center must have an updated physical form, signed and dated by his/her pediatrician, including current immunization documentation. Children who are not school age, must have their physicals updated yearly. Children who are school age, are required to have a physical upon entering Kindergarten and then as required by the school district for which that child attends and acceptable to the local education authority. We will also need to collect a one week's tuition deposit. This deposit is held until the family gives a two week notice in writing and will be applied to their final week of service.

Also upon enrollment, parents will be asked to complete a Family Questionnaire. This is optional but recommended. The information will be used to ensure the best experience for your child/ren. Throughout the course of the year you may also be asked to complete other surveys that the Center will use to improve quality of care.

Payments are due on Mondays for the week of service to follow

Tuition Rates Effective Jan 8, 2024

Full Day Care is a Maximum of 10 hours per day

Infant/Toddler (under 3 years old)
Full Day/Full Week $330 per week
Full Day/3 days a week or less $90 per day
Half day (4hrs or less per day) $65 per day/$210 per week

Preschool (3-5 including Kindergarten students)
Potty Trained- Full Day/Full Week $275 per week
Not Potty Trained- Full Day/Full Week $290
Potty Trained Full Day/3 days a week or less $80 per day
Not Potty-Trained Full Day/3 days a week or less $85 per day
Potty Trained Half Day (4hrs or less per day) $60 per day/$190 per week
Not Potty-Trained Half Day (4hrs or less per day) $65 per day/$195 per week

10% Family Discount available to oldest child with full time enrollment
10% Full Time Staff Discount available
10% Active Military Discount available

- **Payments are due on Mondays for the week of service to follow**
- **Tuition is not reduced by absenteeism unless the family chooses to use one of their sick or vacation days.**
- **If a child has not attended for more than one week without notification from the family, the child's spot will be forfeited.**

Operations Policy

Payments are due on Mondays for the week of service to follow

Days and Hours of Operation
The center is open Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. year round. Holiday closings will be posted in the center and include

- New Years Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day(s)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and Following Friday
- December 24th and 25th

Tuition is due weekly regardless of any absence, including sick days.

Admission

Our program serves children 6 weeks to 12 years.

Attendance
Parents are requested to **call** the center before 9:00 a.m. on the days their child will not attend or will be late. ***Tuition is not reduced by absenteeism*** unless the family chooses to use one of their sick or vacation days.

Vacation
Children need vacations too. A once-a-year (July 1—June 30), one-week tuition will be allotted as a vacation. A credit for service will be added to your account when a written notification has been submitted at least two weeks in advance to the director.

Sick Time
Children do get sick even with preventative measures. We at Little Learners offer parents to use a once-a-year (July 1 to June 30), one week tuition to be allotted as sick time.
Vacation and sick time cannot be carried over to following year.

Two parent accounts
We are willing to set up separate accounts for those circumstances where two parents share tuition payment responsibilities. When children have accounts split between parents, it is Little Learners policy to only release information about either parent's account to the other parent when the account is past due. Both parents are responsible for the full tuition.

Security Deposit
Children may be enrolled in advance with an assigned space by a security deposit. The security deposit will **NOT** be refunded if enrollment is cancelled.

Late Payment
If payment is not rendered within five days and **Little Learners** is unsuccessful in obtaining payment, the balance will begin to accrue at a 15% interest rate. At this time your child's active enrollment status will be in jeopardy.

Collection Fees
Under the terms of the **Little Learners Children's Center** contract, signed by the parent during enrollment, parents are bound to be financially accountable for all legal and collection fees incurred by **Little Learners**

Insufficient Funds
A fee will be charged to your account for payments returned for insufficient funds. In the event of a second returned check, or payment services will be suspended; pending either a cash or money order payment for six months in advance, or **Little Learners** may choose to terminate service.

Agreements with Parents
Please call and let us know if your child is going to be absent for any reason.
An adult must accompany your child to and from his/her classroom.
Please leave at least 2 spare outfits in your child's cubby labeled with their name on it. Parents must supply diapers, bottles, baby food, formula, etc.
Toys are not to be brought from home except on specified days.
Parents are to supply bedding for cots. Little Learners will provide crib sheets for infants only.
Any changes in address, phone number, employment, etc. must be given to the Director in writing.

Weather
All cancellations, delayed openings, and early closures due to extreme weather conditions will be announced on Channel 3 WFSB and/or notices posted prior to storm conditions. ***Every attempt*** will be made to email all families as well. You may also register with Channel 3 news to receive text message alerts. In the event of other serious weather emergencies, such as tornadoes or hurricanes, staff and children will remain indoors away from windows and doors. First aid staff will be on hand to administer first aid, as needed, until emergency personnel can arrive. Parents will be notified after the immediate danger has passed.

Meals and Snacks
Parents must supply their child's lunch. Please be sure to check with the director/your child's teacher regarding any allergen restrictions. Be sure to label their lunch and provide an ice pack for items that may be perishable, or store in the refrigerator, labeled with your child's name. The center will provide morning and afternoon snack and provide milk, 100% juice, and water to drink. Snack menus are posted in each classroom.

Provisional Enrollment
We do not have a provisional enrollment period at Little Learners.

Family Involvement/Access to Program and Facility
Our center has an open door policy. Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit their children whenever possible. The center also plans periodic educational and fun field trips. Volunteers are more than welcome.

Withdrawal/Expulsion of Children
The provider reserves the right to terminate any child or family from the program who does not abide by the policies set forth in this handbook. Examples or reasons provider may terminate care include (but not be limited to):

1. Failure of parent to pay.
2. Failure to complete required forms.
3. Failure to pick up on time.

4. Lack of parental cooperation or communication.
5. Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time.
6. The provider's inability to meet the child's needs.
7. Breach of contractual agreement.

Any outstanding fees must be paid on or before the child's last day. If it becomes necessary for **Little Learners Children's Center** to resort to legal action to collect fees, the parent(s) will be responsible for legal fees incurred.

It is the parent's responsibility to submit a written notice two weeks prior to their child's withdrawal from **Little Learners Children's Center**. If notice is not given, the security deposit will be used.

Medication Policies *See full medication policy for details

INFANT'S DAILY SCHEDULE

Philosophy

Our infant room is intended to provide a nurturing, home-like environment. This area is designed for playing and relaxing, as well as stimulating growth and development. The children are grouped in a manner that is similar to a family environment. Children learn best from peer interactions. We will do our best to facilitate developmentally appropriate interactions while also making sure the needs of each child are met. We will try to maintain the same schedule that is used at home, so please be sure to let us know if there are any changes in your child's feeding, behavior, or sleeping times.

We will fill in the remainder of the time with cuddling, one-on-one interaction, tummy time, art, sensory play and more.

We provide crib sheets for the cribs in our infant classroom only. You may provide a sleepsack or swaddle blanket. We do not allow any "loose" items in the cribs, examples include: blankets, stuffed animals, pacifier clips, burp cloths, etc.

Infant Feeding Policy

1. All bottles and infant food are brought into the center prepared.
2. Frozen human milk can be stored in the large kitchen freezer for emergency purposes only.
3. It is the parent's responsibility to track and label all food/milk with the child's name, the expiration date and the quantity.
4. Bottle feedings do not contain solid foods unless the child's health care provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice.
5. Staff discard after one hour any formula or human milk that is served but not completely consumed or is not refrigerated.
6. If staff warm formula or human milk, the milk is warmed in water at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than five minutes.
7. No milk, including human milk is warmed in a microwave oven.
8. All infants under 12 months old are held for bottle feedings.
9. No bottles are given in a crib or on a cot.
10. Bottles are not propped up for the infant.
11. No cow's milk is served to children under 12 months.
12. No glass containers.

PRE-TODDLER DAILY SCHEDULE

Philosophy

The pretoddler schedule is designed to expose children to stories, creative and challenging activities. We provide the children some structure and routine while also allowing enough freedom to develop their own unique personalities. When the children approach two years old, we can discuss the wonderful opportunities in the **Little Learners Toddler Program.**

Schedule:

6:30-8:00	**Breakfast**
8:00	**Free Play/Outdoor Play/Fine Motor**
9:00	**Art**
9:30	**Diapers/Potty**
9:45	**Circle Time**
10:00	**AM Snack**
10:15	**Sensory**
10:45	**Outdoor/Gross Motor Play**
11:30	**Diapers/Potty**
12:00	**Lunch**
12:30	**Nap**
3:00	**Wake up/Diapers/Potty**
3:15	**PM Snack**
3:30	**Free Play/Outdoor Play**

TODDLER DAILY SCHEDULE

Philosophy

The toddler schedule is designed to expose children to stories, creative and challenging activities. With these age groups, we provide the children some structure and routine while also allowing enough freedom to develop their own unique personalities. When the children turn three years old, we can discuss the wonderful opportunities in the **Little Learners Preschool Program**.

Schedule:

6:30-8:00	**Breakfast @ drop off**
8:00	**Free Play/Outdoor Play**
9:30	**Circle Time**
9:45	**Potty Time**
10:00	**Snack**
10:15	**Center Time (Sensory/Skill Building)**
10:40	**Art**
11:00	**Free Play/Outdoor Play**
11:45	**Potty Time**
12:00	**Lunch**
12:30	**Nap Time**
3:00	**Wake up/Potty**
3:15	**Snack**
3:30	**Free Play/Outdoor Play**

PRESCHOOL'S DAILY SCHEDULE

Philosophy

The purpose of the **Little Learners Preschool Program** is to promote an educational experience in a positive, developmentally appropriate manner. We will allow time for each child to explore and grow academically, physically, and socially. All of the activities are with a "hands-on" approach, fostering each child's independence. The children will choose daily activities and will move freely from center to center, thus giving each child plenty of time to master a particular skill.

Schedule

6:30-8:00	**Free play/breakfast**
8:30	**Outdoor Play**
9:30	**Circle Time**
10:00	**Snack/Story**
10:15	**Centers/Handwriting**
10:45	**Art**
11:00	**Outside**
12:00	**Lunch/Potty**
12:30	**Quiet Book Time**
1:00	**Nap**
3:00	**Wake up/Potty**
3:15	**Snack**
3:30	**Free Play**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Clothing Requirements

Little Learners is a place for play and exploration. Throughout the day your child will be participating in art, sensory and outdoor play and therefore clothing should be clothing that they can move freely in as well as get dirty.

On your child's first day please send in a complete set of spare clothes with your child. Spare clothes should all be labeled with the child's name and should include shirt, pants, socks, shoes and underpants. Please be sure all clothing in your child's cubby is appropriate for the season.

Weather permitting the children will go outside daily. It is required that all children have appropriate attire for each season. Outdoor play is an important part of the child's development. If your child is well enough to attend school for the day then he/she will be taken outdoors during their scheduled time. Exceptions to this are in the summer when the heat index is too high or in the winter when temperatures are below 20 degrees. In the summer we ask that your child has a swimsuit, towel, water shoes and sunscreen to enjoy water play during those hot days. In winter we ask that your child have heavy coats, snow pants, boots, gloves and a hat for snow play.

Releasing Your Child

Parents must accompany their child into Little Learners Children's Center upon arrival and departure. Children are not to walk from the center to their parent's car unaccompanied.

Written notification and proper identification must accompany any individuals who will be picking up children from the center. Persons approved for pick-up are to be listed on your ***Child Registration Form*.**

Custody Issues and Unauthorized Persons

If only one parent has custody of the child (ren) and the other is not authorized to pick up the child, the parent must instruct the provider of this fact and must provide a certified copy of the court order. If any changes occur in the legal custody of the child, the parent must provide written documentation confirming the changes. The custodial parent will be notified immediately if an unauthorized (someone not on any of the forms or a non-custodial parent) person arrives to pick up the child.

Arrival and Departure

Children will miss their parents and often cry upon arrival and departure. It is a natural occurrence and the crying will stop within a few minutes after the parent leaves. It is important that before the parent leaves to take a moment to reassure their child that they will see them later. Concerned parents are encouraged to listen at the door for a few minutes or to make check-up calls from work. Please do not leave your car idling at drop off/pickup.

Drugs or Alcohol

Any child enrolled at the **Little Learners Children's Center** will **never** be allowed to leave with a parent who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Other arrangements will be made to ensure that the child gets home safely.

Late Pickups

Overtime will not be an acceptable practice. Children need consistency and thrive on routine. Children look forward to the arrival of their parents. It is a frustrating situation for both the child(ren) and the caregiver when parents are late.

- Two staff over the age of 18 will be present in the building at all times.
- A parent's primary/emergency contact numbers will be called at the time of scheduled pickup or 5:30 p.m. depending on care. Overtime charges will begin to accrue once scheduled pickup time has passed. ($5.00 for every 5 minutes—payable at time of pickup).
- If no contacts can be made and there has been no contact from the parents confirming a late pickup within 30 min, it will become the **Little Learners'** responsibility to contact the appropriate authorities.
- The **Little Learners Children's Center** is under no obligation to provide extensions of service.

Communications with Children

Children should always be spoken to a positive yet stern tone. You should avoid raising your voice and stay calm when speaking to children. When speaking to any child, it is always best to get down on their eye level so there is definite eye contact and the child feels the most comfortable. Redirection is the center policy for discipline issues. If a child is continually making the wrong choice it is best to direct that child to a new activity. When giving directions to children, the teacher should tell the child what they are to do instead of what not to do. Ex: If a child is climbing on the table the response of the teacher should be "feet on the floor" not "we don't climb on tables". Children should always be given choices.

Discipline Policy

The goal of discipline is to help the child develop inner controls so that he/she may move toward appropriate social behavior. Methods for resolving conflicts are:

• Positive guidance- When a child or children are not making a good choice the teacher will talk to the child(ren) in a positive, developmentally appropriate way. Praise will be given for appropriate behavior and redirection will occur for inappropriate behavior. Choices will be given if possible. Teachers will reward the child for making the right choice.

• Setting clear limits- When the limits of what a child is allowed to do are clear and consistent then behavioral problems are minimized. The rules will be enforced consistently so the child will fully understand what appropriate behavior is.

• Redirection- When a child is not behaving appropriately the teacher may redirect a child to a new activity or to a behavior that is appropriate for that time. Praise will then be given for the new choice that child has made.

When disputes arise among children or between a child and teacher, the teacher will encourage a talking out process among those involved. The goal of this talking out process will be to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using children's ideas whenever possible. A child who may be overly aggressive or is repeatedly destructive of other children's work may be asked to

make an activity choice in another area if talking things through has not resulted in better self-control.

Staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions.
Staff shall not be abusive, neglectful, or use physical, corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment under any circumstances.
Examples of Physical Punishment: Shaking, hitting, spanking, squeezing, etc.
Examples of Psychological Abuse: shaming, name calling, threats, etc. 15
Examples of Coercion: rough handling, forcing a child to sit or lie down, physically forcing a child to perform an action unless restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm. If a child's behavior puts the safety and health of the child, other children, or adults at risk, then the staff will call the parents immediately for pick up. If the behavior continues and the parent has not arrived, staff will call 211 for their Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services. If 211 is unable to help at that time, 911 will be called. No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or another child or adult. The adult restraining the child will be trained to restrain both appropriately and safely.

In an instance where a child's behavior is continually upsetting or dangerous to the caregiver or others, the following steps will be taken.

- A conference will be held with the legal guardians of the child to discuss the issue.
- A specialist will be called with the approval of guardians to observe the child while at school.
- A report will be given and discussed with the guardians.
- Guidance given in the report will be implemented and documented.
- Ongoing progress meetings and discussions will continue.
- In the best interest of the child, if little to no improvement has been made after all prior steps, arrangements will be made for the child to go elsewhere for care.

If the family is asked to find alternate care, resources will be shared with the family to help the child continue to receive the services he/she may need. The program will also help the family to find alternative care.

This policy is in accordance with the federal and state civil rights laws.

INCIDENT AND ACCIDENT POLICY

Incident and Accident reports will be completed by an employee when necessary. Accident reports are to be completed if a child is injured in any way. This is to inform the parent of the injury, how it happened, and any first aid that was done. An incident report will be completed for aggressive behavior or an ongoing behavior issue. When either report is complete, no names other than the child who was injured or had the behavior will be mentioned for confidentiality reasons. At the end of the day, a parent will be given the accident or incident report by a staff member to sign. A copy of the report will be uploaded to smartcare within 24 hours, and parent/guardian/emergency contact will need to sign report at pickup.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Sick Policy

Although Little Learners understands that it is difficult to leave or miss work there will be times when your child(ren) become ill and should not attend the center. Any child that has a temperature of 101.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, or other symptoms of illness, will be moved to a classroom where there are no other children until the parents arrive to pick up, when possible. The child will not be permitted to return until they are fever and symptom free for 24 hours **without the benefit of fever reducing medications.**
Illness symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Any fever of 101 degrees (child needs to be fever free for 24 hours, **without the benefit of fever reducing medications.**);
- Any nausea, vomiting, or uncontrolled diarrhea; any child with a sibling(s), they will also be sent and remain home as well
- Any sore throat, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing, runny nose;
- Any rash suspicious of being contagious or infected;
- Any suspicion of head lice, scabies, or other infestations;
- Any mouth sores;

- Any illness or condition or problem that requires one-on-one care; or
- Eye symptoms suspicious of a possible eye infection (redness/discharge, etc.);
- Is judged to be ill by the staff; the parents/guardians will be called.

Ensure that the facility has a sufficient number of employees to perform all measures listed here effectively and in a manner that ensures the safety of the public and employees

- Parents must come pick up within one hour.
- Staff are encouraged to be vaccinated and receive booster shots.
- All staff and children will participate in regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and should be done:
    - Before coming in contact with any child;
    - Before and after eating;
    - After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing;
    - After using the rest room;
    - Before handling food;
    - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated.
    - After using any shared equipment like toys, computer keyboards, mouse.
    - Upon entry into the building.
- All staff: cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow;
    - Encourage children, when appropriate to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow; and
    - Dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use

Cleaning/Sanitizing

- Routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys.
- Cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as: doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap pads, toilet training potties, desks, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures. Use the bleach/water solution.

Guidelines if an employee or child is diagnosed with COVID-19

- Anyone who has symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should stay home.
- If diagnosed with Covid-19, staff and children will follow the most up to date CDC protocols
- In the event of any contagious illness:
    - Ventilate areas visited by that individual.
    - Clean and disinfect all impacted spaces, especially commonly used rooms and shared equipment.

If a child becomes ill during the day, the parent will be promptly notified. **The parent must make arrangements to have their child picked up within one hour.** In order to reduce exposure and

risk to other children in the day care, the sick child will be isolated (if possible) from the other children until the arrival of a parent or emergency contact. If the parent cannot be reached, the person designated as Emergency Contact will be notified.

Children with acute non-infectious illness may only be brought to **Little Learners Children's Center** if a fever is not present and they are able to participate in activities. The parents of a child with a diagnosed contagious condition (measles, head lice, pink eye, mumps, chicken pox, etc.) must notify the provider as soon as possible.

The provider may have to alert other parents to watch for symptoms in their own child. The provider reserves the right to determine whether a child should remain in the day care when illness is a consideration.

Administrating of Medication

Little Learners Children's Center is **NOT** required by state regulations to administer medications. Individual considerations will be made regarding the ability of the center to administer any medications. Advance arrangements need to be made before the center will accept the responsibility for the administration of any medications. Parents may administer any legal medication to their own child. There are many State regulations governing the administration of medications in childcare centers. Whenever medications are accepted for administration, the following regulations must be followed:

- Medication Authorization Forms and medication labels are in accordance with the State of Connecticut regulations.

- **Note:** Orders and labels must read EXACTLY alike. Parents are advised to have the pharmacy prepare the prescription label EXACTLY as the order reads.

- Specific Time of administration of medication at Little Learners Children Center must be noted on the medication authorization form.

- Any "as needed" medication orders will require parental instructions and written authorization every time medication is to be administered.

Medication Administration Equipment and Plans

- Medication administration plans, orders, and medications must be reviewed with a childcare staff authorized to administer medications. Please plan accordingly to account for the added time this will require.

- Parents are to provide **ALL** medication administration equipment needed: medication administration devices, droppers, etc. If needed, Little Learners staff may require parental demonstration of medication administration.

- **ONLY AFTER** advance planning and consideration will medications be administered other than topical or oral methods. **ALL** other methods of medication administrations will only be undertaken after individual consideration.

Non-Prescription Medication

State of Connecticut regulations allow parents to sign for only a few medications to be administered at childcare centers. All other prescription and non-prescription medications require physician authorization.

The following are the ONLY medications parents may sign for:

- Non-prescription diaper changing ointments that are free of antibiotics, anti-fungal or steroidal components.
- Non-prescriptions medicated powders.
- Non-prescriptions insect repellants.
- Non-prescriptions sunscreen that is free of amino benzoic (PABA) or its derivatives.
- Teething, gum, or lip medication.

SOCIAL SERVICE POLICY

Childcare providers are mandated by the State of Connecticut to report any suspected child abuse to D.C.F. Some of the signs of abuse are listed in our child abuse and neglect policy.

Child Abuse and Neglect Hot Line 1-800-842-2288
or D.C.F. and D.P.H.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Little Learners does not discriminate on the basis of national origin, race, religion, cultural heritage, political belief, marital status, or disabilities.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

All of our staff have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our center.

Child Abuse includes:

- any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e.: shaking, beating, burning)
- any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation)
- neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)
- emotional abuse(i.e. excessive belittling, berating or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth)
- at risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect)

Child Abuse is defined as a child who has had:

- non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him/her
- injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
- is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to:
    - malnutrition, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment

Child Neglect is defined as a child who has been:

- abandoned
- denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally
- allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well being (CT GS 46b-120)

Staff responsibilities:
As childcare providers we are mandated by law to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect or the imminent risk of serious harm of any child.

Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect:

- Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at **1-800-842-2288 or back up line** 1-860-352-9261
- The reporter's name is required, but may be kept confidential.

- Information needed:
    - name of child
    - address of child
    - phone number of child
    - name of parents/guardians
    - address of parents/guardians
    - phone number of parents/guardians
    - relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicator, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect
    - exact description of what the reporter has observed
    - time and date of incident
    - information about previous injuries, if any
    - circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
    - name of any person suspected of causing injury
    - any information reporter believes would be helpful
    - any action taken to help or treat the child
    - seek medical attention for the child- if needed

Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF-136) to DCF.

Staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected

abuse or neglect (CT GS, Section 17a-101e).
All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the Center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.
4. The management of this program supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action (suspension, reassignment of job duties,etc.) should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child.
5. Staff training:
Staff will be required to attend bi-annual staff meetings, held in September and February, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.
6. Provisions for informing families of abuse and neglect policy:
A copy of this policy will also be posted on the parent board. The Director must immediately inform the parents/guardians that a report has been made to DCF.

EMERGENCY POLICY

Minor cuts and abrasions suffered while at the center will receive proper care. Specifically, they will be washed with soap and warm water and properly bandaged.

If a medical emergency should arise, the provider will try to contact the parent first. However, if the time to contact could possibly endanger the child's life, necessary steps such as calling 911, hospital, doctor, poison control, etc. would come first. If need be, the medical team will take your child to the local hospital first, then try to call you upon arrival at the hospital. If a parent is unable to be reached, the provider will keep trying until he or she is available.

Note

Parents: You or your family's insurance is responsible for cost or medical help or treatment due to accidents or illness while at the Little Learners Children's Center.

MEDICAL:

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will attend to first aid as needed. Another staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician/dentist. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's emergency permission form will be brought with them. A staff member will notify the family or alternate pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency room. Additional staff will be called in if necessary, to maintain required ratios. In the event a child becomes ill while at the center, parents will be notified, and when able to do so while maintaining staff ratios, the child will be moved to a designated area where the child will be made comfortable. A staff person will always remain with the child.

FIRE:

Fire drills will be done 4 times per year. The fire alarm will sound, and staff and children will practice all protocol that would be followed in the event of a fire. In the event of a fire, evacuation from the building will be through the closest fire exit.(Each classroom has a map of where to exit the building). Staff will be responsible for supervising the children under their care and leading them to the fire exit. Immediately, the group will walk to the blacktop bike area, safely away from the building and line up at the back fence to take a name to face attendance. Infants will use an evacuation crib and strollers if nearby. Toddlers will be carried or pushed in a stroller when possible. Each class will have their backpack containing their first aid kit. Classroom teachers must also take their clipboard, containing the sign in sheets and should also bring their cell phones. Accommodations will be made for children with any disability to have access to a safe way out. Children with medical conditions will have specific instructions in a care plan about evacuations to ensure safety. Staff will be trained on these procedures upon enrollment. Director or person in charge will be responsible for taking cell phone, emergency file binders from the office as well as emergency evacuation bag with extra clothes, snacks, diapers and wipes. Should it not be possible to return to the building, staff remain with the children and parents will be notified. The children will not be allowed to return to the building until: the search of the building's total premises has been concluded and the Director has been given approval to return.

MISSING CHILD:

If a child should become lost, a thorough search of the center and grounds will be made. If the child is not located, police and parents would be notified and a neighborhood search will begin. On a field trip, the area where the child was last seen would be substituted for "the center and grounds."

EVACUATION:

If the facility must evacuate due to a critical incident, defined as an event or situation where a person attempts to inflict serious injury or death to innocent people by any means regardless of reason or their motivations, the Director or person in charge, will call 911. The staff and children will walk to the playground located between houses 4 and 6 on Model Park Rd., across the street,

where we will reconvene and then contact parents/emergency contacts when it is safe to do so. Ratios will always be maintained and two staff 18 years or older will remain with the children until all children are picked up. Each class will have their backpack containing their first aid kit. Classroom teachers must also take their clipboard, containing the sign in sheets and should also bring their cell phones. Upon evacuation, infants will use an evacuation crib and strollers if nearby. Toddlers will be carried or pushed in a stroller when possible. Accommodations will be made for children with any disability to have access to a safe way out. Children with medical conditions will have specific instructions in a care plan about evacuations to ensure safety. Staff will be trained on these procedures upon enrollment. When the building is deemed safe, all children and staff will reenter the building and make sure everyone is accounted for. Operations will then continue.

LOCK DOWN and SHELTER IN PLACE:

If the facility must go into lock down, or shelter in place due to a critical incident, defined as an event or situation where a person attempts to inflict serious injury or death to innocent people by any means regardless of reason or their motivations, the Director or person in charge, will call 911. Drills are done 1 time a year where all staff follow proper protocol in these situations. In the event of a lockdown, no person will be allowed to enter or leave our building. Classroom teachers will lock all doors and windows in their classroom, and everyone will continue with their normal daily events. In the event that we would need to shelter in place, doors and windows will be locked, lights turned off, and staff and children will have designated places to hide away from doors or windows within their classrooms, or go to the staff kitchen, laundry room, pretot bathroom, staff bathroom etc. which all contain no windows. Large sleeves will be placed on the front door, pretoddler room door and preschool side door top-closing hinge, to prevent anyone from entering the building. The toddler room door will be blocked using furniture, etc. If there is a danger of explosion, the air conditioning or heating system will be turned off by director or person in charge. Infants and toddlers will be supplied with binkies and other quiet activities. In either instance, parents will be notified that they may not drop off or pick up until authorities have deemed it safe to do so. Parents/emergency contacts will be notified when the lockdown or shelter in place has ended.

EMERGENCY DISTRIBUTION OF POTASSIUM IODIDE (KI):

If authorized by the Commissioner of Public Health via the emergency alert system or other communication system, in accordance with section 19a-80 of the Connecticut General Statutes and located within a ten (10) mile radius of the Millstone Power Station in Waterford, Connecticut the director and classroom teacher will administer potassium iodide (KI) to adults present or to children in attendance at the center with authorization forms filled out and signed. Parents/Guardians have the voluntary option to not have the Potassium Iodide (KI) administered to their child. All documentation including the permission to administer Potassium Iodide (KI), Potassium Iodide (KI) preparation and dosing instructions as well as the safety planning information brochure from Dominion Energy. Preparation instructions are posted in each classroom. In the event we would need to evacuate to the alternate location, currently the UCONN Commuter Lot “C”, we would have an emergency early dismissal and all parents would need to pickup their children from the center as soon as possible.

STAFFING

All Little Learners staff members strictly adhere to all State of CT Department of Public Health requirements for employment. This includes but is not limited to a full background check, verification of physical health, immunizations, and ability to perform the assigned tasks. At all times at least one CPR and First Aid certified staff will be present. Most staff members are also certified to administer medications. In addition, staff members attend monthly professional development sessions and are versed in the policies and procedures of the Center. Staff members receive and review an Employee Handbook, a job description, and an orientation to the center. All staff members are required to maintain child and family confidentiality. The Employee Handbook, Center Policies and Procedures and State of CT guidelines are available to parents and families upon request.

In accordance with State of CT Requirements all staff members must participate in professional development activities that equal at least one (1) percent of total annual hours worked.

Professional Development Workshops may include: Early childhood education college course work, child development workshops and seminars, licensing and regulations, health issues, nutrition, first aid, social services, child abuse laws, and programming for children with disabilities or special health care needs.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Special Days

Special days are filled with activities (e.g., birthdays, Halloween, Valentine's Day, etc.) We always welcome parents to bring treats, decorations, games, etc. to help celebrate as long as there is enough for everyone and any allergies are taken into consideration. This can be discussed with the provider in advance.

Water Play

Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease. No child drinks the water. Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in communal water play. Fresh potable water is used, and the water is changed before a new group of children comes to participate in the water play activity. When the activity period is completed with each group of children, the water is drained. Alternatively, fresh potable water flows freely through the water play table and out through a drain in the table.

Nap Time

After an active morning, a full lunch, and a nice story, the children rest on cots for part of the day. They may lie quietly or fall asleep. The provider reserves the right to encourage the child lie down and rest. We require that parents of each child supply a crib-sized sheet and blanket for nap time. Bedding will be taken home at the end of each week to be washed and returned the following week.

Graduation

In June, Little Learners will hold a graduation for preschoolers who will be going to kindergarten in the fall. This is a fun and exciting time for the children.

Thematic Units

As part of the curriculum each week will be accompanied by a theme. The themes will give the week some focus and consistency. The theme list will be posted for parents to see.

HANDBOOK CHANGES

Little Learners may change this handbook and update a policy without notice in order to best facilitate the center.