



LEELANAU
CHILDREN'S
CENTER

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Our Mission:

Nurturing and empowering young children and families.

Our Vision:

A caring community where all children belong and are inspired to become engaged learners and compassionate citizens through meaningful family partnerships, a play-based curriculum and an experienced early childhood education staff.

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Welcome

Welcome to the Leelanau Children's Center! We are delighted to be partnering with you during the most important period of development your child will experience. In these wonderful early childhood years, your family will develop patterns and habits, and your child will develop brain architecture and learning styles, all of which will shape your lives. Research tells us time and again that enriching and supportive environments can help families make the most of these years. We hope that at LCC you will find just such an environment. We invite you to help us grow an organization that is responsive to families and that provides the highest quality programs possible.

The Center is a non-profit agency devoted to the welfare of young children and their families. The Center is licensed by the State of Michigan, has a Five Star rating from Great Start to Quality, and has received awards for excellence at the regional, state and national level. In other words, lots of people who see lots of early childhood programs think we do a great job; we hope that you will think so too.

We work hard to make the Center a place where children and families come first. Many people have worked hard, contributing time and money, over many years to make LCC a comfortable and appropriate place for families to grow safely with support. Thanks are due to all of those who have helped us in innumerable ways. We count on your support to help us maintain and improve our programs in the coming years.

There are several ways to be involved. You are welcome to join committees, to volunteer in classrooms, and to participate in regular work bees. Additionally, families are encouraged to participate in fundraising. Fundraising income can help keep tuition as low as possible and helps support scholarships and other special projects.

The Center is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board is composed of parents and community members. Board Members devote many hours each year to the Center. We consider them our invisible heroes. The Board is divided into several committees, which you are invited to participate in. You will receive an interest form at the beginning of each school year so that you can indicate your interest and availability or feel free to talk to the program director about your interests.

Most of all, we hope that you will join us in planning and participating in your child's early childhood education. Study after study indicates that parents who are actively involved with their child's education raise successful students. We hope that you will share your thoughts, ideas, concerns and talents with us—together we can make the Center a great place to grow up.

The LCC Approach

PLAY BASED LEARNING

LCC uses a play based educational approach with a focus on hands-on learning. LCC provides open-ended opportunities for children to engage in uninterrupted play—play that the children design and control. An important role of the LCC teachers is to ensure

that the environment optimally supports the play schemes of the children and to support the play without interrupting it. We believe that:

- Being able to fully engage with peers can scaffold children's development more readily than can teacher-directed activities;
- Play helps kids learn how to regulate emotions, solve problems, and make plans.
- Authentic, beneficial children's play is enjoyable, voluntary, and self-initiated;
- Play should be spontaneous and flexible, involving problem-solving that doesn't have one right answer and may include multiple or changing solutions

Competence, autonomy, and personal connection: these are the building blocks of a play-based education where children are allowed to become competent by having the time and space to autonomously ask and answer their own questions within the context of a caring community.

LCC uses Emergent Curriculum. The themes and topics that children and teachers explore together will emerge from children's questions, interests, and reoccurring play themes. The sources to which children turn for information gathering will eventually translate into academic disciplines such as math, language arts, science and creative arts.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LCC is rooted in the belief that positive relationships are the most important aspect of any care and education setting. LCC staff are committed to nurturing warm and meaningful relationships with the children and families in their groups. Social emotional development is the foundation upon which all subsequent development rests. Teaching and facilitating pro-social skill development forms the core of each and every day at LCC. We help children learn the skills and behaviors used to play and learn with others, help children understand their feelings and those of others, and support their growing independence in solving personal and social dilemmas.

Helping our young children with self-regulation is an important LCC goal. When asked about school readiness skills, many teachers say children who succeed in the early elementary grades know when and how to control their impulses. They can follow through when a task is difficult and listen to directions for a few minutes. These skills are linked to self-control. We begin to help children gain the tools they will need to work on this challenging skill needed to learn in a structured group environment. There are many "opportunities" to experience social conflict throughout a child's day at LCC. It is not our goal to prevent all conflict, nor to protect children from experiencing disappointment, nor to resolve all conflicts for children. Instead, it is the teachers' role to structure conflict resolution and problem-solving strategies for children, and to help them become more independent in positively handling them.

ROUTINES AND RITUALS

We create and follow consistent routines and create rituals that support community building every day. We start the day with activities to connect children to teacher and to each other both in large and small groups. Classroom communities spend a lot of time getting to know each other, how they are alike, and how they are different.

OUTDOOR PLAY

We see our outdoor environment as an extension of the classroom, providing children with the opportunity to appreciate and explore the natural environment while engaging in the process of inquiry. Some of the experiences children have in our outdoor playscape include utilizing loose parts, building materials and large motor equipment, discovering natural items and critters, observing changing weather and environment, and participating in growing food and flowers in our garden beds. We go outside every day!..in all kinds of weather and for long periods of time. Our Northern Michigan weather gives kids a lot of practice in selecting and putting on the appropriate gear for the day.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT

LCC assessment is not synonymous with testing. It rather is an ongoing, authentic observation and gathering of information throughout the year to help us understand a child's individual development and how to best support them. We use a research-based tool called Teaching Strategies GOLD. The learning objectives cover 10 areas of development and learning, including broad developmental areas, content areas, and English language acquisition when appropriate.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Nutritious food is a central component of the Leelanau Children's Center programs, as growing bodies and brains require great nutrition to fuel optimal development. Children participate hands-on in the food program by tending to our gardens, visiting local farmers markets to learn about what grows seasonally in our community, and helping prepare meals from scratch with real ingredients. We eat family style in our classrooms and teachers have lively conversations with children supporting social connections, sparking curiosity about what's on the table, and encouraging kids to try new foods and eat healthy portions. Research on the life-long benefits of a healthy diet and developing positive attitudes about a variety of foods is clear; we know people are healthier when they eat well. Research also states that these habits are formed early, when children are young. LCC provides morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack, which include milk, protein, fruits, vegetables and carbohydrates.

INCLUDING FAMILIES

A positive family partnership is very important at LCC and each child's best interests is our shared concern. This partnership provides the continuity and support that children

need to feel safe and secure enough to explore, play, enjoy, and learn in our care. We have an open-door philosophy. We invite and encourage families to join us in many ways. Individual children are seen as a part of a family and we hope to include and support the family as a whole. Teachers and Program Director maintain regular contact with families. Contacts include home visits, daily conversations, Bloomz posts, family events, and parent-teacher conferences.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Building community-minded and inclusive citizens begins in the early years. We start each day with rituals and activities that connect children to teachers and each other to help create a sense of belonging for everyone. Individual children are seen as a part of a family and of a greater community and we encourage families and community members to join us in a variety of ways.

TEAM TEACHING AND RATIOS

LCC recognizes that the ratio of teacher to child is important. We have a 1:7 ratio with a maximum group size of 14 preschool children in a classroom. We use a team teaching model with 2 qualified teachers for each class. Each child will have a primary teacher who will be the main contact for the family and will conduct ongoing observation, developmental assessments, and planning for that child.

Enrollment Policies

Application for enrollment for returning families begins in March and returning and waitlisted families receive priority enrollment, as well as siblings of currently enrolled children. Application for new families begins in April. A program tour is a prerequisite for enrollment. We want you to visit the Center before you enroll. We believe that this procedure ensures that we are a good fit for your family's needs. Applications are considered in the order in which they are received, with priority granted to returning families, working families and families in high needs situations. Application forms must be completed and returned to the Center Director. An enrollment fee is due at the time of registration. A confirmation email will confirm your child's enrollment status.

A physical examination by a qualified physician, verified by a Health Appraisal Form (available at the Center) is required by your child's first day of attendance and should be updated every two years for preschool aged children and annually for toddlers. LCC also requires up to date immunization records or a waiver signed by the local health department for any vaccinations not received. Other forms are also required (Child Information Record, Permission Form, etc), and will be included in the enrollment packet. All forms must be completed by the first day of attendance.

Calendar and Hours of Operation

Our school year is typically set to begin the day after Labor Day. A detailed calendar will be provided to each family by the end of September indicating all breaks including a Winter and Spring breaks. Summer program start and end dates will be decided on by the beginning of April. A reminder that LCC is closed or delayed for inclement weather when Leland Public School is closed or delayed. When in doubt, check local news sources and our social media for closures. If the power is out for 30 minutes or more we are required to close and have all children picked up. We will contact you in this event. Closures may also be warranted during a public health crisis and we will make this decision with the input from the local and state health departments.

HOURS OF OPERATION

During the school year, the Center is typically open Monday through Thursday between 7:30 am and 4:30 pm. Our enrollment and budget is examined annually to determine our operating days and hours. In addition, the Center is closed during the two weeks before the summer program begins and two weeks before the school year begins, on Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving holiday, two weeks in Dec/Jan and one week in spring for breaks.

DAILY ROUTINE

We begin the formal part of our day at 9:00. We expect you to drop off and pick up your child in a timely manner. When necessary we will organize staggered drop off and pick up times to help with the flow of this time. While we follow the rhythm of the children we do follow a general time frame for the day. This is our typical daily routine. A time frame with a more detailed explanation of what occurs during each time can be viewed in each classroom.

Preschool Daily Schedule

7:30-9:00 Arrival and Freeplay
9:10-9:25 Greeting Circle
9:10-9:30 Snack
9:30-10:30 Indoor Freeplay
10:30-10:40 Small Group/Planning
10:40-11:40 Outdoor Freeplay
11:40-11:45 Clean up
11:45-11:50 Meeting/Morning Recall
12:00-12:30 Lunch
12:30-1:00 Rest/Nap
1:00-2:35 Nap/Outdoor Freeplay
2:35-3:30 Indoor Freeplay, Open Snack, Clean up
3:30-4:30 Departure, Freeplay

Staff and Volunteers

The Center is staffed by an extraordinary group of talented and skilled professionals. We also seek to include volunteers in our program whenever possible. Anyone who has unsupervised time in the classroom, is screened through a database, called the Child Care Background Check System and includes an FBI fingerprint check and a check against the

child sex offenders database. Our Directors and staff are fingerprinted and all are checked through this system and sign off on criminal record checks. Staff are also required to demonstrate that they are free of TB. All staff and volunteers must sign a criminal clearance statement indicating if they have been convicted of child abuse or neglect or a felony involving harm or threatened harm to an individual within 10 years before date of hire/volunteering. All staff and volunteers will sign a child abuse mandatory reporting statement concerning knowledge of the child abuse and neglect law. Staff and volunteers who have not signed statements, or been cleared by, the department of Licensing and Regulatory affairs will not be permitted to be with children at LCC.

Volunteer Supervision Policy

The Leelanau Children's Center does not allow volunteers to have unsupervised contact with children. There will always be a staff member who has completed and passed the comprehensive background check working with and supervising volunteers. A listed offense, as defined in section 2 of the sex offenders registration act, 1994 PA 295, MCL 28.722. (b) Child abuse or child neglect. (c) A felony involving harm or threatened harm to an individual within the 10 years immediately preceding the date of offering to volunteer at the center. And documented clearance from the department of Licensing and Regulatory affairs that a volunteer has not been named in a central registry case as the perpetrator of child abuse or child neglect shall be on file at the center before having unsupervised contact with a child in care. All staff and volunteers receive public sex offender registry clearance before having any contact with children in our care and a copy of the clearance is kept on file. Any individual registered on the PSOR will be prohibited from having contact with children at LCC.

Our staff receive consistent professional development and are constantly working on their own teaching skills. All staff members are required to complete the Child Development Associate certification process within their first year at the Center if they come to us with no formal education in early childhood education. Most of our staff have degrees in fields related to early childhood education and several of them have Bachelors or Masters in Early Childhood Education. Our staff also participate in an on-going evaluation cycle, which allows them to set goals for themselves and to see their progress in achieving their goals. All staff hold current certifications in CPR, First Aid, and Bloodborne Pathogens.

If you are interested in volunteering with us, please let us know. We know that our programs are extraordinary because of the many hands, hearts and minds at work, at play and thinking with us every day.

Discipline

Disciplined behavior and self-regulation are the primary goals at the Center. LCC staff and volunteers will only use positive methods of discipline that will encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation. The main focus for our discipline approach is to first emphasize safety of self and others, ensuring that children feel connected to the adults providing care, and on problem solving.

Discipline is not used as punishment and not to just get children to "behave" Our discipline approach will help guide a child toward self-discipline and independence. Methods are based on a child's developmental needs and may include; redirecting child away from unacceptable activity to a constructive one, planning ahead to prevent problems, teaching

and modeling appropriate behavior, setting clear and consistent rules, talking about feelings and what can be done with “big” feelings,

Our curriculum focuses heavily on social skill development, providing children with many opportunities to learn appropriate ways to express themselves and to manage their wants, needs and emotions. Most preschool social conflicts occur over misunderstandings or a desperate desire for an object. Each conflict presents an opportunity for children to learn conflict resolution skills, which we delight in teaching. Our staff has frequent training in how to help children manage conflict and positive discipline approaches including Dr. Becky Bailey’s Conscious Discipline approach.

Each classroom provides an “alone space” that is designed to provide a calming environment for one child to go to as an option for taking a break from a stressful situation or when over-stimulated. The space has materials for a child to use to help express their feelings. A directed “time out” or having a child take a break from a group of children or activity will only be used to stop aggressive behavior or to allow an angry or upset child to calm down. It will only be used as a last resort to help a child gain a sense of control. The time will be used as an opportunity for children to clear their minds and join the group in a more safe/productive state of mind. When staff use this approach they will not humiliate or threaten children and supervise children at all times.

**None of the following means of punishment will be used at LCC; any forms of physical punishment or restriction, inflicting mental or emotional punishment such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child, depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use, excluding children from outdoor play, gross motor activities, or daily learning experiences, confining a child in an enclosed area, or placing any substances in a child’s mouth (including but not limited to soap, hot sauce, vinegar). Non-severe and developmentally appropriate discipline or restraint may be used when reasonably necessary to prevent a child from harming himself or herself or to prevent a child from harming other persons.*

In the event of discipline problems that concern us, we will notify parents and together we will develop an appropriate discipline plan.

Communication

We consider regular and frequent communication a vital aspect of Center programs. We hope that we can spend a moment each day briefly describing your child’s day and catching up with you. We will need help from parents whose children carpool or ride the bus in order to find communication strategies that suit your schedule and ours. If a family requires or is more comfortable with verbal communication rather than written, we will accommodate. If a family’s first language is something other than English, we will do our best to provide and interpreter and translation of written material.

Our school year typically begins with a home visit. Your child’s teacher will call you in late August to set up a time to come and visit or to have you come to LCC for a visit. Our goal with the home visit is to begin, renew or strengthen child-teacher and parent-teacher relationships. The base of most of our work is relationships, and we want to get them off to a good start. The home visit often puts new LCC children at ease on the first days, and gives

you and your child's teacher a relaxed chance to talk about your family's culture, hopes and needs.

We can best support your child and family when we know a bit about your life. Changes such as starting a new job, moving to a new home, new people moving into your home, illness, deaths, births in the family, visiting friends and/or relatives, etc. are all situations which may disrupt a child's routines. Please keep us posted.

LCC provides frequent updates via email from the Director and via the Brightwheel app from Director and classroom teachers (more information on this will be shared by your child's teacher).

Parent-teacher conferences and home visits are offered twice each year, fall and spring. Our goal at the fall conference is to discuss the developmental journey we (you and the teachers) perceive your child to be on for the year. Together, we may set some goals and talk about strategies we'll use to support your child. The spring conference is a more in depth look at your child's developmental progress over the year. We'll show you photos and will have tracked your child's development using various assessment tools, periodically, we may offer additional conferences throughout the year.

We try our best to keep you informed of the goings on at the Center and describe an area of child development that we see emerging among children at the Center. Teachers write newsnotes from the classroom shared on Bloomz, giving you a closer look at classroom activities, and we pass out the monthly Parenting Communities calendar so you can attend family friendly events and playgroups outside of LCC. Our Website and facebook pages are updated on a regular basis and the Admin team will send out emails with a variety of information and news.

If there arrives a time when you feel that you are unable to communicate effectively with your child's teacher or an LCC staff member, we encourage you to take your concern to the Program Director. S/he will do his/her best to understand your concern and will work with you to establish more effective communication and/or address your issue. If working with the Program Director is ineffective, you are welcome to contact the Executive Director, and if those efforts feel unsatisfactory, we encourage you to contact the LCC Board President. While we hope never to have to resort to a chain of command sort of communication structure, we are committed to ensuring that you are able to air your concerns and promise that we will do our best to work with you.

We believe that education is most effective when relationships are meaningful and based on trust. Please note that we will hold our conversations with you in all confidence, we will not share sensitive information about your family unless you authorize us to do so.

Please help us build relationships with you and your children. Effective relationships are grounded in frequent and meaningful communication, which is what we hope you will find at the Center. Please let us know if there is anything more we can do to promote open communication with you and your family.

What to Wear

Think of your child's comfort and developmental needs when you dress your child—clothing free of complicated fastenings and easy to move in is important for your child to develop self help skills such as dressing and toileting. We are messy at the Center, we paint, play outdoors, cook and play on the ground – please send your child in clothing that will allow him/her to feel comfortable about paint drips, spills, mud, etc.

Toileting accidents are frequent occurrences, especially for younger preschoolers. Please provide extra sets of clothing—several pair of underpants and pants is a good idea. Any clothing soiled during the day will be plastic-bagged and placed in your child's cubby.

Suitable outdoor clothing will be needed each day. Always send clothing appropriate to the weather, and perhaps a bit more as the weather here in Northern Michigan is very changeable. Please keep a change of clothes in your child's cubby as well. We go outside everyday, and without the appropriate outerwear, your child may be uncomfortable or unable to participate in certain outdoor activities. If the wind chill is severe, we may restrict outdoor play to the wind-free side of the building. On hot days during the summer, children's play may be restricted to shady areas. We will apply sunscreen to all children as needed. If you have special sunscreen that your child needs, you will need to supply that and let your child's teacher know. In the winter, please send in slippers, thick socks or some indoor shoes. Boots are not appropriate classroom footwear, as children's feet get too hot AND they track snow and gunk all over the building.

Please LABEL all clothing- from socks and underwear to snow pants and mittens. You can scarcely imagine the number of white socks and black mittens that teachers see in the course of a day. Unlabeled items end up in the lost and found, or more often, travel home with the child in the adjacent cubby. We cannot be responsible for wandering articles of clothing. We work hard to help your child develop the habit of putting things away.

Food Service

Nutritious snacks and lunches are made at the Center and are served throughout the day: a light breakfast at about 9:20, a hot lunch at 12:00, and an afternoon snack at 2:30. We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which underwrites a small portion of our food costs and ensures that we meet the minimum State nutrition requirements. All food served will be served in accordance to the CACFP nutrition guidelines.

Our meal program heavily emphasizes local producers and products. We strive to teach children healthy eating habits and encourage children to participate in meal preparation. Teachers eat family style with children at all meals, modeling and encouraging social engagement.

A monthly menu is posted for lunch and a weekly menu for snacks, with substitutions noted. LCC ensures that children with special dietary needs will receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's needs. If your child has medical allergies to any food, make sure to fill out a medical statement to request special meals and/or accommodations.

If you choose to provide your child's food instead, you need to provide a morning breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack every day. If for some reason you do not bring food for your

child, we will not deprive that child of meals or snacks. In fact, no child will ever be denied food for any reason and can request food when hungry. LCC offers milk and water at every meal for children eating meals we provide or if the child brings their own food.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) • If you wish to file a Civil Rights complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov • Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). • USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Rest Time

While napping and quiet time is required for children under the age of 3 not all children will fall asleep. In these situations, quiet activities will be provided, such as looking at books and puzzles. Some children fall asleep, and some do not – our expectation is simply that they rest. The Center is a busy place and these young developing bodies need some downtime. We will need you to supply us with a sleeping bag or blanket, pillow and or comfort objects for your child to nestle into. Your child will have a nap cubby in which these items will live. We do not launder napping supplies unless there is an accident. Please, take these items home weekly for laundering.

Rest time begins at 12:45, nappers are welcome to sleep as long as they need to. Let us know if you want us to awaken your child before s/he naturally arouses. Any child under the age of 18 months will be permitted to sleep on demand.

Field Trips

We take periodic walking field trips. In your enrollment packet is a form indicating your field trip preferences. Primarily our field trips will include walking to a nearby place in the community such as the Public School playground, local parks, or local businesses.

Items To and From Home

Each child is provided with a cubby in which s/he can store clothes, outdoor gear, artwork, slippers, etc.. Please clean it out on a regular basis. You can help us by not sending your child to school with toys/ items from home. The exceptions are special blanket or lovey

(stuffed animal, soothing item), family photos or letters, or something that has been planned with your child's teacher (we do activities that include children sharing an item from home). If you do send something from home, please label it and make sure that your child understands the Center sharing policy—*any item in the classroom (or on the playground) must be shared*. We often ask children – are you sure you'll be okay with other children playing with that? We will not assume responsibility for lost or broken items from home.

Adjustment Period

Coming to the Center can be an overwhelming experience for some children. Your child will have to learn to trust new adults and to live in a very social setting. This process may take some time, which is why we insist that children have a fixed schedule and will encourage you not to make any changes in your child's schedule during the adjustment period. If it appears that your child is struggling with the morning drop off at the Center, we will work with you to develop a predictable and stable routine – children do better when they can anticipate the sequence of events. If the adjustment appears to be unusually rough, we will work with you to develop some plans to ease the situation to the best of our ability. An attitude of trust toward the Center on your part will help your child believe that s/he is safe with us.

Financial Policies

Tuition is paid in equal monthly installments in advance of services. All invoices are created on and paid through the Brightwheel app. Families are required to register on Brightwheel with a payment method at least 1 week prior to the first day of school. Prepaid tuition is not refundable. In order to meet cost of living increases, LCC tuition typically rises by approximately 5% annually.

Any billing concerns must be brought to the attention of the Director within 30 days of the billing date, or the original billing will be considered correct. Past due (30 days of non-payment is considered past due) accounts will be assessed a late fee of \$10 per month. Overdue accounts will result in a conference between the Director and parent, at which time a payment plan will be developed. If the payment plan is not followed, the Center reserves the right to terminate services and may send the account to collections. Current tuition must be paid in full in order for registration for an upcoming session to be accepted.

Absences do not reduce tuition. We plan for and staff for your child each day, and the bulk of our costs are staffing related. Snow days and power outages also do not reduce tuition. The Snow day decision is made by the school district superintendent and is posted on area television, radio stations, and websites. We are required by law to close if the power is out for 30 minutes or more due to sanitary conditions. We will call you if this happens during the day and ask you to come pick up your child. This is a per site situation and is often hard to predict. While we are entirely sympathetic to the difficulties of working parents with sick or snowed in children, we are obliged to maintain policies that promote fiscal and personal health and safety.

Written notice of termination or changes in schedule must be directed to the Program Director two weeks in advance of the change.

Any child left at the Center after closing hours will be cared for by an overworked staff person, and a charge of \$30 per 15 minutes (rounded to the next 15 minute increment) will be invoiced.

The Center works diligently to help families find resources. If you are struggling to pay your childcare bill, please let us know and we will do our best to help you. Invoices are considered past due after 30 days of non-payment. Past due accounts must be resolved by meeting with the Program Director. If action is not taken to resolve past due accounts, services will be terminated until the account is paid in full and a new classroom slot becomes available for your child. Past due accounts will be assessed an additional charge of \$10 per month. Termination of services will occur when a balance for a family with one child exceeds \$1,500, or two or more children exceeds \$2,500. Children who qualify for GSRP do not count towards the maximum parent balance.

Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is a free state-funded preschool program for eligible children who turn four years of age on or before September 1 (December 1 with waiver). Extended hours are available for an additional cost. Please talk to the Program Director for more details. Applications are completed by August 1st prior to the upcoming school year that a child will turn 4.

Tuition Assistance

We strive to make early childhood education ACCESSIBLE TO ALL, regardless of ability to pay tuition. We will work with each family individually to make our program accessible. The true cost of each child enrolled is three times the amount of what we charge in tuition and our staff, board, and community is committed to both secure the funds to keep tuition at a reasonable, justifiable rate and to make scholarships available to those who need it. Please talk to the program director about some of these options listed:

- LCC Community Scholarship - Through our annual Gifts That Matter appeal, fundraisers and community partner donations we are able to maintain the LCC Community Scholarship Fund. These funds are reserved to assist families with tuition costs when no other resources are available. Applications are accepted on a quarterly basis and prioritized based on need.
- DHS Child Care Assistance - Child Care assistance may be available through the Michigan Department of Human Services and we can help you navigate through this process. Please note that supplemental funds come from agencies that may not be synchronized with our billing. You may receive delayed reimbursements. Let us know if you would like us to help you navigate the process of applying through DHS.

Fundraising

Tuition covers only a small portion of our operating costs (about ¼). In an effort to keep tuition affordable, we hold fundraising events each year. You may help by serving on an event planning committee or at the event itself. As event planning takes shape, there may be more specific ways in which you can help.

Health and Safety

Your child's safety is of primary importance to us. When you drop off and pick up every day, please do your best to park on the school side of the street or parking lot, in order to avoid crossing the street. If your child is a bus rider, the bus will drop off/pick up at our front door, and a teacher will walk out to the bus, to assist the children's arrival/departure. When you see the orange cones in front of the building, please don't park there – we are reserving the space for the bus, so that children are dropped off onto the sidewalk.

At drop off and pick up, please make contact with your child's teacher, so that we know when you are leaving/taking your child, in addition to signing them in and out.

Please note that all staff and volunteers are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. If we suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, we are required to report our concerns to the Department of Human Services.

Your child's health is a matter of importance to us. On your child's first day or before, a health examination form, signed by a physician, must be provided for each child (a State requirement). LCC and licensing requires an up to date immunization record, or a waiver signed by the local health department for any vaccinations not received. Our physical form serves as the guide to the physician for the health examination —the expectation is that each child has had a hearing and vision assessment, height and weight, and has a blood pressure check.

Staff must also submit a negative TB test, indicating that they have not been exposed to Tuberculosis. When a child or staff member is ill with a communicable disease, all parents of children at the center will be notified.

The Center is inspected regularly by the State of Michigan to insure that all health and safety requirements are met. In addition, our quality rating observers and set yet higher health and safety standards, which we also meet. We maintain a licensing notebook that is available to families during regular business hours. The notebook contains all the inspection and special investigation reports and related corrective action plans since May 28, 2010. Licensing inspections and special investigation reports from at least the past 2 years are available on the child care licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Staff are expected to maintain a healthy environment. This shall be accomplished by frequent hand washing by children and adults (always before/after handling food and toileting), using gloves, when handling bodily fluids and seeing that toys, equipment, and sleeping mats are sanitized regularly. Hand Washing instructions are posted in the bathrooms, and teachers instruct children in how to effectively wash hands- adequate soap, warm water and drying hands with paper towels.

If your child develops symptoms of illness during the day, we will notify you and request that you pick your child up as soon as possible. If we are unable to reach you and are very

concerned about the health of your child, we will call the emergency contact people on your emergency card. Depending on the severity of the symptoms, we may remove the child from the classroom while we await your arrival. A call from us is no reflection of your parenting; symptoms of illness often develop rapidly.

Our health policy requires that children be kept home if they have any of the following:

- a profusely running nose,
- running or pink eyes
- a rash
- a deep seated cough
- diarrhea
- an elevated temperature
- vomiting in the past 24 hours

Children must be free of an elevated temperature, without medication for 24 hours, before returning to the Center. Medications mask fever (and other) symptoms, so please do not administer any non-prescribed medications in the morning when sending your child to the Center. When antibiotics have been prescribed, they must be taken for 24 hours before the child may return to the Center, unless your Doctor tells you otherwise. Children who are under a Doctor's care may return to the Center when the Doctor feels they are well enough to do so; a Doctor's statement so indicating may be requested. Please notify us if your child will be absent. We worry about you all when we don't know where you are.

Please notify us immediately if your child develops a communicable disease. We will then notify all parents of children at the center. Parents will be notified by email. The Director and parents will determine when children with communicable diseases may return to the Center. Parents of children with serious communicable diseases must consult with the Director about admission or continued enrollment.

In case of serious communicable disease, a team which includes a health care practitioner, the parent, a community member, and the child's teacher will make a recommendation to the director as to enrollment or continued enrollment for the child. Serious communicable diseases will be reported to the Health Department. If a parent wishes to appeal the decision, the Board of Directors will make a final and binding decision.

If your child is taking prescribed medication and you need us to administer it during the day, bring it to the Center and give it to the teacher. Do NOT send the medication with your child. A permission form must be signed and dated by the parents; we'll initial it as we administer the medication. We also ask that you remind us about the medication by placing a note at the bottom of your child's sign in sheet. All medication, prescription and over the counter, must be in the original container, have your child's first and last name on it, have the pharmaceutical label with your child's name, physician's name, dosage instructions, and the name and strength of the medication.

No child will be excluded from our program or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or staff apprehensions.

Plan to inform parents if their child has an accident or incident

If there is a concern with a child due to accident, illness, or incident: The teacher will bring the situation to the attention of the program director (PD). The teacher or the PD will notify the parent by the preferred means of contact as established by the parent, calling, texting,

email. If the parents cannot be reached, other contacts on the child information card will be attempted. If the situation does not warrant emergency care, the staff member will reassure the parent that their child is all right and explain what the situation is (child's symptoms, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, bumped their head, etc.) and what needs to be done. E.g. the child needs to be picked up, the staff will monitor the child's behavior, just wanted to let you know. If the situation warrants emergency care, notify the parents that 911 has been called and let them know what has happened and where to reunite with their child. If the situation is more delicate the parents will be asked if they can come in to pick up their child and speak with the PD regarding the situation. An accident report will be filled out, signed by the teacher, program director and the parent. A copy will be given to the family and one will go in the child's file.

In case of an accident, whereby medical treatment is necessary, we will notify parents immediately by phone. Your child will be transported to the Hospital if necessary, accompanied by a staff person. A written report for all accidents, incidents, and injuries will be filled out, signed by the teacher, program director and the parent. A copy will be given to the family and one will go in the child's file. All incidents involving a child's health, safety, or well-being will be reported by phone or verbally to parents either immediately or if minor, at the end of the school day. Plan to inform parents if their child has an accident or incident.

Children at the Center are constantly on the go. The recovering or somewhat ill child who appears on the mend at home may wilt at the Center. The activity and social level of life at the Center can make it difficult for children to muster the energy to fight an illness and keep up with their peers at the same time. Our final health policy statement is: if children are well enough to come to the Center, they are well enough to participate in our activities, indoors and out.

As this lengthy section demonstrates, your child's health is of critical importance to us. We will do our best to promote a healthy lifestyle by feeding your child nutritious foods, encouraging physical activity and teaching problem solving and self-management skills.

Drop Off and Separation

We understand and respect that for some of you, we are the first people you are entrusting with your child. For some children, entering this busy, bright and new place is overwhelming. For others the place may be fascinating, but leaving you is too much to consider. And yet others waltz right in the door without a thought to anything but the sand table or their new friends. For every family this dance is different, but a few factors are at play in all families. Some thoughts:

Make sure that you feel good about the Center if you plan to leave your child with us. Your fears, concerns, and wariness exude from your pores (even if you have never said a word to your child) and your child may drink it right up. If you feel unsure about us, figure out how you need to resolve your worry – do you need to talk more to teachers? Observe the classrooms? Talk to other parents?

Rituals help people cope with transitions. Most families establish mealtime and bedtime rituals without even realizing it. Chances are that you end your day with your child with a

pattern — that's because it's easier! Consider beginning the day in the same fashion. Think through your morning activities and figure out how to streamline them and offer your child some roles and predictable sequences. Include your departure from your child at the Center in your planning process.

Having a predictable set of movements from the time you arrive at the Center to the time you leave often reassures a child (*we walk in the door, you take your coat off and hang it up, I walk you to the couch where we read one book, we find your teacher, I give you two kisses and one hug, and then I leave*). Be sure to let us in on the plan, and let us know when you are leaving, so that we can step in if needed.

We are excited to imagine all that will grow between your family and LCC. We know that these early childhood years are critical foundation years and we are honored that you have chosen to share these most precious years with us. We will do our utmost to provide you and your child with the support and resources that will help you all grow to meet your optimal development.

Please stay in touch with us, let us know how we are doing, share your hopes and dreams, and help us do all that we can to support children and families.