

Lake Tarpon Learning Center

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♦ Family Information Handbook ♦

This packet (and much more) is available on our website: www.LakeTarponLearningCenter.com

Mission and Vision Statement

Our mission is to create a secure and loving atmosphere that is developmentally appropriate for each child. We are committed to maintaining a clean and safe environment, where children can embark on a journey of learning and growth. Through high quality, consistent care, and positive guidance, we can foster a space where children not only learn academic skills but also develop emotionally, socially and creatively. Our goal is to provide a foundation for lifelong learning through engaging experiences and a supportive community.

Our Program and Philosophy

We are proud to provide quality services for children from ages two to five years, including an excellent state funded VPK program for 4-year-old children in a warm, safe, and nurturing environment, which fosters individual development and creative expression. Our school age program provides after school services for children upon kindergarten entry through 5th grade completion including transportation from Sunset Hills and Tarpon Springs Fundamental Elementary Schools.

We believe that children learn best when they feel competent and have a positive sense of self. We provide an environment that supports this natural learning process and that fosters confidence by allowing each child to use his/her unique learning style to develop individual strengths. Each classroom is specially designed to accommodate the specific developmental needs and abilities of each age group. All rooms have clearly designated activity centers that promote social interaction, self-confidence, and independence. Materials are organized and made available to the children to promote exploratory and productive activities along with fostering self-direction. This allows the teachers to interact with the children and devote more time guiding the learning process rather than directing activities.

Our school-age after school program is designed as a family type environment, encouraging friendships, school involvement and homework help. The school-age staff works to support school lessons and activities, while also allowing for comfort, safety, relaxation, care, and fun in a free-flow environment.

STUDENT/FAMILY ORIENTATION

Program Enrollment

Our program fiscal year runs July 1st through June 30th, basically concurrently with the Pinellas County Public School calendar. For VPK and school age care purposes, our official “school year” begins on the first day of public school and will end on the last day of school. The period in between is considered summer, and all children enrolled qualify as “full time” during that period. Initial enrollment and registration for the new school year will require a yearly registration fee of \$50, per family during the fall, and an additional \$25 for summer (registration fee does not apply to VPK ONLY students). When you enroll in our program, you accept a complete position in our program, which includes the **entire fiscal calendar**, regardless of attendance.

Due to the small size of our program, it is common for us to fill up each year. Wait list names are collected and we attempt to accept children as spaces become available. Should you choose to join our wait list, your information will be saved, and you will be contacted if an opening becomes available. We will continue through our wait list on a first come, first served basis – prioritizing age ranges/ranges that best suit the program - until a position is filled, also giving priority to siblings within the program. The applicable non-refundable registration fee is considered the hold on the available spot, and the start date begins as the opening is created. Spaces are not left open when anticipating an enrollment, so should you desire to hold the spot and are not yet ready to enroll the child, full price weekly tuition will be due, or the position is forfeited.

There are several forms that must be completed and returned before we will assume the responsibility of caring for your child. You may print this packet double sided and complete the forms or pick them up from our center directly. Some of these forms may need to be updated frequently, as required. You will be notified when any of your forms have expired or are expiring. Your child’s file information will be inputted into our childcare software program as well, where it can be viewed and updated or edited as need. We will send out a new registration link each fall requesting updates for your information, including emergency contact information. We do also ask that you make changes throughout the year as needed as well. You can access Brightwheel for some updates or send a message to our admin to make other changes. **Please be sure to fill out each form entirely, placing an N/A in any spaces left blank, where appropriate.** The following items must be completed to begin care:

- * Child Identification Form (front & back)
- * Doctor’s Physical Exam (2-PreK only)
- * Notarized Emergency Release
- * Immunization Record (2’s-PreK only)
- * LTLC Policy Sign Off Page (front & back)
- * Online Portal Registration (Brightwheel)

These first several pages of the packet are informational, so please detach and keep for your records. Be sure to read our enrollment packet thoroughly and ask questions, should you have any, before agreeing to our policies.

Hours of Operation and Schedule

Our center operates Monday through Friday, from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm. – basically year-round (see our holiday closing schedule). Our full day care drop-off window is from 7:30 to 9 am and our school age (school year) window is 7:30 to 8 am as the bus leaves promptly at 8:05. VPK children are required to be in the program at the 9:00 start time and must be picked up promptly at noon. Drop off for a VPK ONLY child can be no earlier than 8:45 am. We do ask that children have a consistent drop off schedule, when possible, to assist in transitions and learning as well as our planning and staffing. Be sure to alert us via our parent communication app if there will be a variation in your ‘usual’ schedule. Children may be allowed to be dropped off outside of the window – as an exception, but no later than 10 a.m. - with notice and documentation of an appointment or other schedule disruption. Pick up time is flexible; however, we do ask that you do not schedule your regular pick-up time within the nap time window of 1:00 – 3:00pm. Should you need to pick up during that time, please let us know in advance, and message when you are a few minutes away so that we can transition to pick up for the child. During that timeframe, the kiddos are napping so staff may not be actively watching for pick-ups - and the doorbell could wake the children.

We treat every activity as a learning opportunity, and our morning snack time is no exception. We begin our morning snack routine at 9 a.m. and it is important for the children to be in and settled. Please note that this is a simple morning snack of two components daily, not a full breakfast. Early arrivers should eat breakfast at home, as the snack is light. Any child arriving after 9:15 will have missed mealtime and will not receive a morning snack in the program, so be sure that you have nourished your child for an active morning. Please do not send your child into our program with food at that time, as a mealtime would be disruptive to the children who have finished and are involved in circle time or other routine activity.

Our program closes promptly at 5:30 pm. We require that all children be picked up from care BEFORE that time. Again, we ask that the pickup schedule be fairly routine and that any variation to the usual schedule be reported to staff as soon as possible so that staff planning and arrangements can be made. Alert us by calling the center or sending a software message as soon as you are aware of an alteration. Reach out to your emergency contacts or authorized pick-up people to ask for pickup assistance if needed. If any child left in our care at our closing time (or near closing time for a child who is left beyond their usual pickup schedule), our staff will try to contact those permitted to pick up the child. If no authorized person can be immediately reached, the local police authorities may be contacted to pick up your child. Do not wait until 5:30 pm or after to alert us of an upcoming issue or e, as our staff need to have personal arrangements made before that time as well. After 5:30 p.m. (or 12 noon for a VPK ONLY child) a late pickup fee of \$2 per minute, per child, will be immediately assessed. The late pickup charge may seem high, but it is meant to be a deterrent so that this will not happen, as our staff are ready to go and intend to leave the center at 5:30. Late pickups are treated as a serious infraction, and a family that continues to pick up late often, will see an increase in the late pickup fee from \$2 per minute to \$4 per minute, and eventually the chronic lateness will be grounds for termination from our program.

Holidays and Closures

The following are the approximately 10 holidays that we **generally** close: Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day & the day after (2 days), Christmas Day & Day after (or Eve or other day depending on how the holiday falls – 2 days), New Years' Day, MLK, Jr. Day, Good Friday & Memorial Day. Full tuition is due regardless of how holiday closures fall. **This is a general closure schedule, and it is subject to change based on local school schedules and holidays. As some holidays may fall over the weekend, we will be closed on one day during the week, to provide our staff paid holidays and time with their families. Schedules and reminders are posted on site!*

Hurricane/Inclement Weather Closing Policy

It is also important to note that in the event of a hurricane or other serious weather threat, we will follow Pinellas County Schools' policies and decision regarding safety and the closing of our center. We also reserve the right to close additionally if school is not in session or no announcement is made, and the weather is to be severe or dangerous. Pinellas County Schools' announcement will serve as ours – and additional announcements will be made via our software app and our Facebook page, when possible. As always, regular tuition will be due regardless of closings or attendance.

TUITION & ATTENDANCE

Registration/Tuition Payments

All completed forms, the corresponding registration fee, and the first week's tuition must be handed in before leaving your child in our care. Fees will not be prorated for entering our center mid-week or later. **All students are billed FULL tuition weekly, regardless of attendance, year-round. Absences due to illness or family emergency are not exempt from payment.** Tuition and all parent fees are payable in advance and are due no later than Monday afternoon. Tuesday may be used as a grace period, if necessary, but at close of business, tuition will be considered late, and a \$15 late fee will be added to your account. Chronic late payments will be grounds for termination. Tuition payments can easily be made via our software app or in person by cash or check. A weekly statement is sent, and reminders will also go out via email. A debit/credit card or an ACH (check/bank routing number) can be used, with a service charge. You have full control over your payment portal and can set payments on a recurring option, if desired. If a payment is returned, a \$25 returned item fee will be added to your account.

Parent Paid Tuition Rates & Fees

*Our tuition fee scale is as follows:

2-year-old children (until first full week after 3rd birthday) - **\$230/week;**

3 to 5-year-old children (not yet VPK age) - **\$220/week;**

3 to 5-year-old VPK funded children (9-12 only VPK days only) - **\$0/week (FREE – STATE FUNDED)**

3 to 5-year-old VPK funded children staying full day (VPK weeks only) - **\$180/week**

3 to 5-year-old VPK children staying full day (NON VPK, full time weeks *breaks*) - **\$220/week**

School age children (kindergarten entry) before and/or after school - **\$110/week**

School age children full week (summer & school break weeks) - **\$140/week**

Our **registration fee is \$75 per family** but is broken down into two installments. A \$50 registration fee is charged for enrollment during the school year, and a \$25 registration fee is charged for enrollment for or during summer.

Both charges are billed on a yearly basis and will amount to a \$75 year re-registration fee.

Subsidy Paid Fees & Charges

If your family size and income levels qualify, childcare payment subsidies are available in our area. We are contracted with the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas and can contract with Pasco/Hernando if needed, to receive these funding payments for qualified families. Although we cannot/do not have access to the program or the systems to be qualified, we can offer you the information to check it out and apply. Qualification requirements have recently changed, so I urge you to investigate it for yourself.

Pinellas ELC **can** subsidize your tuition payments, although they do not cover our full invoice amount, so an additional payment is needed to cover the difference. This chart will break down what ELC currently pays for the main age groups listed, and what our charges are, giving you a differential that will be invoiced weekly. This is IN ADDITION to the parent fee that they will deduct from the payment as well. We are happy to go over this in greater detail if you would like. (Pasco rates vary greatly, so this chart would not apply the same). This info is subject to change. *Some rates can vary by age. **Eff 7/1/26

Age Group	Our Fee	ELC Payment	Charge (not including parent fee)
2s	\$230	\$199.6	\$30.40
3s	\$220	\$150.90	\$69.10
PreK5	\$220	\$139.20*	\$80.80*
Wrap	\$180	\$101.43*	\$78.57*
S/A PT	\$110	\$72.75	\$37.25
S/A FT	\$140	\$105.40	\$34.60

Other fees (details found in policy sections): Late pickup fees are **\$2 per minute, per child** past closing time; **\$4 per minute, per child** for chronic late families. Returned check fee is **\$25**; Late Payment fee is **\$15** at close of business Tuesday; **SCHOOL AGE:** No show at after school van pickup without a call is **\$15**.

Attendance Policies

We are expecting your child each day and look forward to seeing and greeting them at their regular drop of times. If your child is not attending for the day, please take a moment and message the staff to report an absence. We appreciate a 'heads up' as to whether a child is not feeling well or is just playing hooky for the day. This way we can stay on top of attendance and be aware of any illnesses to add to our log. If an absence is pre-planned, please let us know in advance so we can plan for that as well.

When enrolling in our center, you are 'leasing' a permanent position in a classroom. This agreement prevents us from 'leasing' your child's spot to anyone else. Therefore, it is vital that you understand that the full tuition payment for your classroom spot is due each week, regardless of attendance. The program budgets for a full program, with all spaces paying tuition weekly. If you want to attempt to remove your child from the program for a vacation, or over the holidays or during summer break, etc., be advised that we must fill the space for our budget purposes and that you will likely need to re-join the waitlist to return. Your space WILL NOT be held or guaranteed unless weekly tuition is consistently paid, even during absences.

ILLNESS AND INJURIES

Sick Policy

Lake Tarpon Learning Center is a "well-child" care facility. At no time do we provide sick childcare. The following illness policies will be strictly enforced, for the health, well-being, and safety of all concerned. Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to the center if the child shows any signs of illness or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular day care program. Sick children expose other children to the spread of their illness and require additional care and attention that we are unable to give. If other children become ill due to exposure to your sick child, other parents will be unnecessarily inconvenienced. Every effort is taken to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging hand washing and other sanitary practices. If your child is unable to participate in the normal activities of the daycare, including being able to play outside with their class, your child **MUST** stay home. When your child's class goes outside, it is against regulations to keep your child inside with another class. In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and are expected to come pick the child up as quickly as possible. If the parent(s) cannot be reached or have not arrived within a reasonable amount of time, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to come pick the child up. In accordance with licensing regulations, we are required to inform you that some children in our center may not have their current immunizations.

*The following is a list of symptoms requiring removal of a child from care:

*Fever: Fever is defined as having a temperature over 100.4°F. **Child MUST BE fever free (without the aid of fever reducing medication) for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to the center.** This means that any child that is sent home from the center with a fever of 100.5°F or higher is **NOT eligible to return to the center the following day.**

*Child complaining of sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion.

*Vomiting or Diarrhea: runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within last 4 hours.

*Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.

*Runny nose (other than clear), draining eyes or ears.

*Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice (live or nits), rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, **including ringworm.** **A doctor note may be required to return.**

*Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety, or well-being of the other children in our care.

If these symptoms are noticed or suspected, or our staff simply feels a child is not feeling well without these symptoms, parents/families will be alerted via the software and/or a follow up phone call if necessary. We request that you do your best to pick up or send an authorized adult to pick up your child as soon as possible to help control any risk or spread and to get the child home to rest. Our staff keeps a detailed log of symptoms and illnesses within the program, and these symptoms will be recorded for tracking purposes. Please be sure you are letting us know if your child exhibits these symptoms over a weekend or other time outside the center.

We are serious about reducing the spread of germs as much as possible, and we wash our hands often!! Your kiddos will form this wonderful habit here, and we hope that you will continue to urge it at home, as well. We require all children to drop their items upon entry and make their way immediately to a sink for **handwashing**. This is a great habit to create and helps keep outside germs from entering the program. Children also wash their hands if they are to transfer classrooms or combine to another group, to keep from spreading germs from group to group. This also includes school age kiddos coming in from elementary school, as we'd like to keep those germs over there! Handwashing is required for both children and adults at those times, as well as before and after diapering, or using or assisting with toileting, after handling bodily fluids (wiping noses, etc.), playing in shared water areas and before and after meals and snacks. Staff will also ensure that they're washing their hands after handling garbage or cleaning, as well as before and after administering any type of medication.

Medication

Lake Tarpon Learning Center has a policy that we will not administer medication, except for an EPI pen for potentially lethal allergies or an emergency asthma inhaler for breathing distress. In these circumstances, a medication form is needed giving written permission, and specific procedures must be followed, including a log where designated work team member must document any administration. Parents will also be alerted via Brightwheel or phone call in that situation. Families must replace expired or depleted medications in a timely manner. Speak with Ms. Tami or Ms. Jen if you have a medical need.

Injuries

When your child is in our care, we will make every possible effort to keep them safe. At no time during the day will your child be in a situation that is harmful to them. However, accidents will happen, and children may become injured, due to the fault of no one. Some children can be clumsy or just trip and fall, and sometimes become scraped or bumped. When a child has an accident such as these, we will write up a form called an Accident Report Form. The form will describe the activity that was taking place, and how your child was injured. This form will be available for you to read when you arrive to pick up the child, and/or will be sent to you via our childcare software app. Be sure to sign this form, stating that you have read it, return it to your child's teacher and it will be entered into our accident/incident log and placed into the child's file. If someone other than the parent picks up a child and an accident report is present, staff will have this person sign the accident report, and make a copy to be sent home to the parent. Anytime a child falls and seriously bumps their head or forehead, a call will always be made to the parent. This is just a courtesy call, so that you can use your judgment whether to come check on your child. Anytime a child's head is injured, a close eye will be kept on them just to be sure they are okay. In the case you must take your child to a doctor, your personal insurance should be used. We are not responsible for medical bills related to or in conjunction with an accident, injury or illness that occurs while attending our program.

DAILY OPERATIONS

Childcare Software

We are proud of our software system and the benefits it offers. You will read and learn more about it as we go through, but be on the lookout for your enrollment email, prompting you to sign up for Brightwheel and add the app to your smartphone. This software will give you the ability to check your child in and out, see tuition charges and balances, make payments, receive messages and alerts, interact with the teachers and staff, receive photos and updates throughout the day and even more! We expect that all parents will have the app downloaded and be prepared to utilize it minimally for check in and out each day.

Open door policy

Although our front door is secure from unexpected visitors and entrances, we do consider ourselves to have an open-door policy, in that families and parents are welcome inside as desired. We simply ask that visits are announced/plan so that we are available to allow entry and accompany parents in the program. If your visit is to discuss your child with the teacher, we ask that we plan a conference or phone call when your child's teacher can devote uninterrupted time to you and your conversation. Please keep in mind that our work team are active in caring for children within the room throughout the day. We strive to keep communication lines open via our childcare software and through phone contact, as necessary. You are also encouraged to plan a time to visit your child's classroom as a volunteer or special guest. We'd love to have you read a book or present something special to you in our classroom! Speak with our staff if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity.

Security & Surveillance

Our program is equipped with electronic security and surveillance. Our center entrances and surrounding outside areas are under video surveillance. Managerial staff can always view and review the cameras, as necessary. This video footage can be stored for up to 3 days for review, if necessary, by an approved governing agency. We are also equipped with a security latching front door. This door can only be opened from the inside unless a staff key fob is used. Staff will need to allow entrance to each child or a visitor and release the latch – making it even more important for children to be dropped off during the morning window. Staff have visual access to security camera on the porch, alerting them of someone at the door. There is a doorbell to the left of the door if it seems that you have not been noticed. You may also call the center's phone or message using the software app if you are arriving at the door during a non-typical pick-up time of day. Please note that we do call for your child to prepare to leave when you arrive on the parking lot camera, so be sure that you exit your vehicle right away as they will be waiting near the door. If you must take a phone call or other distraction that may keep you from coming up to the door right away, please consider circling the block or parking next door for a few moments to keep staff from alerting the kiddos of your arrival too early.

Sign In & Out

It is a requirement that each child be signed in and out from our program. There is no exception to that rule. Our software allows for hands free check in, using your personal cell phone/device to scan a QR code. It will document the date and exact check in/out time as well as a digital signature, as required by law. Be sure to download the app following the instructions received to enroll and be prepared to scan your child in before their first drop off. Please be sure to follow each prompt and get to the GREEN completion screen before leaving the area. It is VITAL that all parents, family members and emergency pickups be aware of the software and how to use it, as each child must be correctly checked in and out each day. Children enrolled in the VPK program or funded by ELC must always have a valid check in and out, for audit purposes. No exceptions.

Dismissal Authorization

Upon enrollment, we require that you provide us a list of emergency contacts should we need to reach someone. Those contacts are listed as emergency as well as authorized pickups. You can continue to add other authorized pickups, in a case that someone else needs to pick up your child. Please be sure to add these extra contacts, in writing – and into the software app, alerting us of the change. If someone outside of the typical daily pickup contacts is coming, please call or send a software message, alerting the center. Along with this parental authorization, this responsible, authorized, adult pickup person will need to provide a photo ID and use the checkout app to document the “sign out” signature and time, for us to release the child(ren). Children will not be released to any parent, guardian or pick up person that appears to be impaired or under any negative influence. If a person exhibits behaviors that are noticeable to staff, the child(ren) will remain in care, and an alternate pick-up person will be requested.

Transportation & Field Trips

If your child is enrolled in our before/after school programs, permission must be granted to allow transportation service to and from school as provided. To keep your child safe, we require that all children be buckled into their seatbelt before our van will depart. Please teach your child the importance of good behavior while in our vehicles. If your child participates in our after-school program, know that it is our priority to ensure that they leave with us each day. If your child is not in school or is not riding the bus with us after school for some reason – it is your responsibility to let us know, in advance – before dismissal time. The bus cannot leave the parking lot without confirmation from a parent, teacher or office staff which is a challenging task when waiting in a filled vehicle. For this reason, we will charge a \$15 inconvenience fee when this happens... again, to deter it. Also, note that we will use our Brightwheel app prior to pick up time to “check in” our EXPECTED attending students and mark ABSENT to those we are aware of, to organize our pickup list. However, physical attendance is taken on paper inside the vehicle, as students enter the bus. The app “check in” does not mean they are in the building just yet!

During school breaks, our school age children may take field trips. We plan these outings in advance with plenty of time to schedule and alert families. We will send out an alert or message on Brightwheel, and post signs and reminders of the upcoming event. Parents are required to acknowledge a permission slip allowing their child’s attendance on the outing, and acknowledging the details such as location, departure and arrival times, cost, etc. During summer camp, a field trip schedule or calendar may be issued – including a permission slip. Signs and reminders will continue to be sent and posted as well. LTLC/summer camp shirts are required during those field trips and are offered for sale frequently throughout the year. These field trips, as well as other in-house special activities, are billed to the parents each week as they are planned to occur. You will receive notice and reminders about the events, and any missed field trips or events will be credited back to you (unless a pre-sold ticket had to be purchased in advance).

In addition to the school age children, occasionally the Pre-K class (4/5-year-olds) will attend a field trip. When such an excursion is planned, you will be notified, and permission slips will need to be acknowledged. At no time will parent or staff vehicles be used to transport children on a field trip. The outing may be taken on foot, or the licensed and insured Lake Tarpon Learning Center bus or van will be used, and all transportation safety protocols followed.

Use of Technology

Television and technology use and viewing by our young, preschool children is not part of our frequent daily program. Teachers may use technology on occasions or to share relevant content as they see fit, for a brief planned period or lesson. On special occasions, we may use technology for a special event or movie day – with prior parent notification. School age children can access technology a bit more frequently, with the use of an interactive action/movement dance game in the classroom. The amount of time used is limited to occasionally, and no longer than 15 minutes at a time. During our school age summer camp, a quiet age-appropriate movie or show may be played for optional viewing during a quiet/rest time, as needed or requested. Electronics such as cell phones are not permitted but should a child carry one to elementary school, it must always remain powered off and inside their backpack.

Rest Time

Our rest time takes place within a window of time between 12:30 and 2:45 p.m. each day. Immediately following lunch, children work to clean up, potty or diaper, prepare for nap and take a quiet rest time. We provide a cot to each child, along with a sheet and blanket for rest time. Their sheet and blanket are kept in their own private cubby each day, until it is laundered once per week (or more, if needed). Extra sheets and blankets are available, and donations are always accepted (crib sheets/receiving type blankets – must fit in cubby).

Dress Code

Children must be fully dressed and ready when they arrive at school. It is an expectation that children come into school dressed and ready to play. Clothing should be comfortable and practical. No open toed shoes or sandals are permitted. Refrain from sending your preschool child in wearing jewelry or other distractions. We ask that you keep a change of clothes here for your preschooler, for accidents or messes. We ask that you replace this set as needed, whether it gets used and sent home, or if you need to replace it in order to ensure that they are seasonally suitable for outdoor play to protect against heat, cold, sun injury and insect-borne disease. We do keep a few extra pieces on hand for emergencies.

Items from Home and Lost & Found

Clearly label all items that are sent in with your child. A jacket or coat needs a label to ensure that it is returned each day. Items often look similar and are difficult to distinguish between for the children. Occasionally, we will gather up unclaimed items and display them for families before taking them to a donation center as unclaimed. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. A reusable water bottle should be labeled and following our requirements and instructions (explained below). Other personal items from home should NOT enter the building. This includes all gadgets, accessories, toys, and trinkets.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Mealtimes - Morning snacks are provided and served promptly at 9:00 am. Our lunch time is 12:00 pm, and a few minutes earlier in the little ones' classrooms. Lunches must be brought in each day by the child, with more information to follow. We provide afternoon snacks to all children present at 3:00 pm. If your child has allergies and requires a modified diet, please notify us in writing.

Hydration - A water cooler is provided within each classroom, and children have full access to small cups and water to drink. A re-usable water bottle from home is permitted, with certain specifications and requirements. The water bottle must be non-sweat (insulated) with a flip top/closeable opening (not a straw or open spout). It must be labeled with the child's name EACH DAY and it is to be sent home daily as we are not permitted to wash or store them. We also ask that these bottles are used for ONLY WATER, and do not send sports drinks or juices in them. We will urge the use of a cup or water bottle for all children.

Early Morning Drop Offs/Snacks - We understand that some children arrive early and need to eat before school or our morning snack time at 9:00 am. A child arriving between 7 and 8 am may bring in a morning snack, if necessary. We will not allow children into the center with candy, donuts, chocolate, or other sugar filled snacks. Some suggestions would be a morning snack bar, toast, fruit, etc.

Lunches - All children are required to bring a packed lunch daily. Students are asked to bring a packed lunch that can be stored independently. We cannot alter the temperatures of food; therefore, lunches must have a cooling pack or warm food be stored in a way it can be eaten. Educators will assist with unpacking and ensure freshness of the food items before serving. Staff will urge children to save leftovers to take home, especially unopened packages – and that way you can see what they have or have not finished. We ask that lunches contain foods that are filling and healthy for your child. We work to ensure safety of your children, so we require that children under 4 are not offered these foods: hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonful of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed hole. Ensure that food pieces are no larger than a ½” square for 2's. Whether food is provided by us or brought from home – we must serve items according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability. Juices are limited to 100% fruit juice, and no more than 4 ounces a day. We ask that CANDY not be permitted in the lunches, and that you work to keep the number of sugary foods reasonable. We have the right to refuse to serve inappropriate items that lack freshness, fail to meet nutritional food safety guidelines and/or are not age appropriate.

Breast/Bottle Feeding – If a young child is nursing, we encourage and support breastfeeding and can accept, store, and serve expressed milk for feedings according to food safety standards. We will accept milk in ready to feed sanitary containers labeled with the child's first and last name and can store it in the fridge for no longer than 24 hours. We will ensure that breastmilk is gently mixed, not shaken – to preserve nutritional components. We will not serve solid food in a bottle without a health care provider note. We can also provide a space for a breastfeeding mother, if desired.

Celebrations/Birthdays - We love to celebrate with the children, and birthdays are important to us!! You are welcome to send in special snacks or treats, assuming they are store bought, and an appropriate size for a small child (i.e. mini cupcakes, etc.). Be sure to check with your child's teacher for the best day and time to organize an event and ask about any allergies or issues within the classroom. Be sure to give us some advanced notice of these treats so that we can assist children in finding alternatives if they are not able to participate.

Allergies/Tracking: Our snack menu lays out our anticipated recurring snacks and is also posted at the door. If there is an instance where we must change or switch up the snack, it will be noted on the working meal calendar on the refrigerator. This will help with any issues tracking allergies, etc. Should a child with differing abilities need special meals, tracking or feedings, we can provide a daily record via Brightwheel to document.

EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

Positive Discipline

Our goal is to help nurture and love your child, making them feel safe and teaching them all that we can along the way while they are here with us. LTLC staff are trained in the Conscious Discipline strategies and approach discipline in a positive way. Our goal is to teach children how to acknowledge and manage their own behaviors while teaching them to effectively solve problems and understand feelings – their own as well as others. We teach the importance of safety, care of property, good habits, rules of conduct, empathy, consideration, and respect for others. Our discipline strategy is preventative in nature and teaches the importance of basic self-discipline in the child. When a negative behavior is exhibited, it will be acknowledged by staff with positive commentary, including guidance and even directions on how to choose a different or better behavior. Children are constantly urged to make good choices and celebrated when they do so.

A specific set of positively worded, simplified classroom and playground rules are in place and enforced throughout the day. These expectations will be discussed with your child, reiterated often, and will be posted at the center. Your child will become familiar with these rules, as they will be taught in a developmentally appropriate and respectful manner so that the children will come to understand that the rules are in place for the safety of all children. If it seems the positive approaches just aren't working, and a child is exhibiting continued behaviors that need further addressing, parents will be notified via the app or a phone call discussion, or even calling a sit-down meeting together to discuss options or a behavior plan. If the issues continue to progress, a plan will be put in place to contact some outside agencies or resources to assist. This is for all of us – both as the caregiver, but also for families to learn some extra behavior management skills, or to access more resources for the child. The goal of outside intervention is to limit suspension or expulsion, and to assist in making the correct accommodations for the success of the child.

Dangerous Behaviors

In the event a child is exhibiting dangerous behaviors, staff members will call in for help and additional staff can come to assist. The priority is to ensure the utmost safety of all children, so if a situation arises where it may require temporary removal of the child or the other children from the environment, additional staff are able to separate the groups to an additional destination (i.e. playground, other classroom, etc.) as the situation is resolved. In these extreme cases, a sit-down meeting with families will be required, and a decision will need to be made regarding setting goals for continued behaviors. If occurrences of this nature continue to take place, administration will discuss a plan of action with the family, and it may be decided that alternative options are needed – or we may need to work with families to seek the best care options for their child if all parties agree that our program can no longer meet the needs of an individual child.

Our center strictly implies standards that prohibit children from being subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food/drink, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical/corporal punishment is prohibited by all childcare personnel or any others. Any such activity would be reported to authorities as abuse.

CURRICULUM & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Learning & Assessment

We are very pleased to say that our program utilizes the Frog Street Curriculum to base our learning and child development. This curriculum allows us to focus on learning through play, while incorporating age-appropriate themes and standards. Each classroom has a separate curriculum version, giving variation from year to year within the program, but a consistent learning pattern for everyone. A lesson plan is provided by each teacher weekly and is posted in the classroom, alongside the class's daily schedule. Teachers can utilize the online learning guides, as well as the developmental checklists to help guide classroom instruction and activities. Your child's teacher(s) will frequently observe individual children and make anecdotal notes to monitor development and progress. We may also utilize an ages and stages questionnaire to gauge where a child is developmentally, as needed. Children in VPK will see other assessment reports as well, as we do follow the state standard and administer the FAST/STAR assessments three times per year, as required. We utilize a program called Nemours Reading in VPK as well, and children are assessed for participation in this program and results of this are received in the beginning and near the end of the school year as well. Staff will work to share this information with families frequently through communications, or a parent conversation/conference at least twice per year.

We are thrilled to speak with you more frequently regarding your child's development, health, behavior, or any other topic you like, should you wish to – or should we feel is needed. You may call the center or utilize the Brightwheel app to set a time for a phone conference during nap, or an in-person meeting at a scheduled time when the teacher can have classroom coverage. We will do our best to accommodate any needs, respecting home languages whenever possible. Teachers may send updates and messages via Brightwheel and you are encouraged to utilize the software to do the same! We pride ourselves on working TOGETHER as a family unit, in the best interests of the children. It's beneficial for us all to be a team, and for your child to see that as well.

Outside Services

It is our pleasure to share any and all information we have with you regarding the option of outside services for your child. You will be alerted specifically, but we frequently have hearing and vision screenings taking place in our center, as well as school picture days, a book bus, pony ride pictures and more! We are also pleased to allow access to outside services that perform developmental screenings, occupational therapies or other needs your child may have. Speak with Ms. Tami at any time if you have questions.

EMERGENCIES

Preparedness Drills

Per licensing regulations, we are required to perform various drills throughout the year. These drills will include lockdown, tornado, and fire. Children will be instructed on what to do and where to go during these emergencies. If you happen to arrive at the center during one of these drills, please be patient and do not disrupt. For example, during a lockdown drill, all doors will be locked and will not be opened until completion of the drill.

In the event of an actual emergency requiring that we evacuate our center, our pre-determined re-unification location will be the Fire Station next door on Gulf Road. We will also use our Brightwheel system to notify parents. Our emergency kit is stocked with emergency supplies and emergency plans are in place. Read over these specific emergencies for more information/plans.

Fire Evacuation

As we practice in our fire drills, children will be escorted from the building following the emergency map within the classroom. An alternate route is also in place and practiced, in the case that the emergency route is blocked. Once outside, children will be escorted to a safe place such as the neighboring fire station to await parent pick up. Software app will be used to send alert as soon as we are to safety.

Tornado Alert

Doors will be locked, and staff will shuttle children into the basement for a safe space and gathered in the interior of the room. Access to the building will be limited, but parents will be able to retrieve children from the center once the tornado threat has passed. An alert will be sent as soon as possible.

Lockdown: Terrorism/intruder

Our entrance area is controlled by a locking door mechanism. If we are notified of a suspicious person in the area, teachers will deadbolt the doors and take the children into the basement for safety. Parents will be notified of the lockdown and again when it is safe to retrieve the children. No one will be allowed into or out of the building during the lockdown.

Public Health

Every effort is made to stay on top of public health or environmental issues, and all precautions will be taken to ensure the safety of the staff, children, and families in our care. This includes things such as monitoring air quality reports and keeping children inside or limiting outside time as recommended on these occasions – as well as other public health/safety requirements.

Other Emergencies

Should we need to evacuate the center, we will be located next door at Tarpon Springs Fire Rescue Station 70 – 1025 Gulf Road. If we need an alternate evacuation location, we will move to the Sunset Hills Elementary area at 1347 Gulf Road. Parents will be notified in real time via INSTANT ALERTS on the software app as soon as we are able, and our exact evacuation location will be given at that time. Be sure notifications for our app always stay ON!!

OTHER CENTER POLICIES

Divorce Records/Custody Agreements

Divorced parents are required to provide a copy of custody papers to be kept in the child's file at the center. Without custody papers, we have no legal way of preventing the child's non-custodial parent from removing them from the childcare center. However, if we are provided copies of restraining orders or other scheduled visitation paper, we can then call the police if the non-custodial parent does try to remove your child.

Parent & Child Confidentiality

It is our policy to keep your child/family records confidential. We will not share any of your child or your family's information with anyone outside of our center without your prior written consent, except for information required and requested from state agencies. Know that to provide the best care possible, all staff are informed and aware of child and family information within the program. Records will be updated annually, and more often if needed.

Abuse & Neglect Reporting

In the state of Florida all educators and childcare workers are mandated reporters, which means that we are legally required to report all suspected abuse or neglect. In the best interest of children, we take this responsibility very seriously and will not hesitate to contact the abuse hotline/authorities and make a report if we suspect any abuse or neglect of a child in our care, or any others, as required by law.

Non-Discrimination Policy

LTLC does not discriminate against anyone (adult or child, staff, parent, friends, or family) on the basis of sex, age, religion, national origin, marital status, disability or other. We work to include children with special needs or differing abilities and will always make every accommodation possible to serve all, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Pets & Animals

Please note that although we do not currently have any, classroom pets or visiting animals will be fully immunized (if applicable) and that the animals are suitable for contact with children. Direct supervision is given for all interactions between children and animals, instruction on safe behaviors in proximity to animals is provided, and child pet allergies are considered. Reptiles are not permitted within the center.

Conflict Resolution

Should the need arise, and a problem needs addressing for resolving, please remember that staff are tending to children and their attention needs to stay there in the moment. Feel free to message via the Brightwheel app either to staff or directly to admin (using admin only message option) to discuss any situation at a more appropriate time. We will work to resolve the issue, and we will be happy to meet in person, talk on the phone, or message to find a solution that suits the situation best.

Termination Policy

We reserve the right to terminate your child's enrollment for the following reasons (but not limited to): failure to pay; failure to complete the required forms; physical or verbal abuse of any person or property; lack of compliance with handbook regulations, etc. We also reserve the right to refuse service as we see fit.

Additions and Revisions to Handbook and Contract

These policies and your "contract" are valid throughout your entire enrollment time in our center. The yearly registration fees will be billed at the designated times to apply to transition costs, supplies, activities, etc. We reserve the right to make changes in our rates and policies as we deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur. Please read this handbook carefully, as we firmly stand by our policies.

END OF INFORMATIONAL/POLICY PORTION OF THE PACKET. Keep these pages for your reference.

The remaining pages of this packet are to be filled out and returned to us BEFORE your child can attend the program. The information provided will be used to create your Brightwheel profile for check-in, as well as our billing system. You must fill out each form COMPLETELY, leaving no blank spaces. Utilize NONE or N/A if something is not applicable. Remember that our program provides an AM SNACK and a PM SNACK – and your child will also be present for LUNCH with their bagged lunch. The notary portion must be signed on site for the Director to notarize, so be sure that you are not waiting until the morning of start... in case she is not present. Also, remember that kiddos age 2 through start of kindergarten need to have a YELLOW PHYSICAL FORM as well as a BLUE SHOT RECORD OR EXEMPTION in order to attend the program. If you have any questions, feel free to email at LakeTarpon1@yahoo.com so that we can ensure file completion at start.

THIS SECTION IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

IN ORDER TO HAVE DOUBLE SIDED

FORMS TO RETURN!!

The following pages require review & acknowledgement of understanding and compliance. Be sure to keep the previous pages for your own records and return the remaining pages to the center for enrollment, along with the other required documents. Initial where prompted and sign at the end of the page.

Tuition Fees are sent out on Saturdays and are due on Monday, each week. Tuesday evening is considered late, and a \$15 late fee will be automatically added to your account via Brightwheel. _____

Registration Fees of \$75 per family (split) are billed upon initial enrollment and twice during the year. _____

Hours of Operation 730am-530pm. Any children signed out after 530 pm (by our system) will be charged a *late pick-up* fee of \$2/minute, per child. Chronic late pick up is grounds for \$4 fees and/or dismissal. _____

Holiday Closings will be posted. Regular weekly tuition is due regardless of closings or attendance. _____

Illness Policies will be strictly enforced as described in the handbook. A child must be **FEVER FREE** for 24 hours before returning to our center (if sent home with a fever, they may not return the following day). _____

Check in and Out is MANDATORY each day. Brightwheel software accounts must be made and then will be used daily. Be sure to read any notices/reminders given to you on the screen and posted in the areas surrounding the check in and out station. _____

Authorization to Release Only people who are on the pickup list and are **16 years of age** will be permitted to remove your child from our center. We must be notified in advance if a person outside of the regular pick up people will be allowed to take the child. Contacts must provide a photo ID and use the software to check the child(ren) out. _____

Appropriate Clothing is required each day. Clothing should be comfortable and seasonally appropriate for outdoor play. Assume that clothes will get dirty/stained. Children are required to wear socks and sneakers or other closed toe shoes (no sandals). Be sure to label all clothing brought to the center, including jackets. We are not responsible for soiled, stained, lost, or misplaced items. _____

Supplies (such as extra clothing) should be kept in your child's cubby. Items must fit inside the cubby, and outside toys are NOT PERMITTED in our center. If your child is not toilet trained, you will be responsible for sending in diapers and wipes. Your child's teacher will notify you (via software app) when more supplies may be needed. **We require that all diapers/pull ups have TABS for diapering without undressing.** _____

Emergency Prescription Medications will only be administered for emergencies – if they are in original prescribed container, with proper dosage information printed on it. Medication forms must be filled out and administration training/instructions provided to staff. _____

NO Smoking Policy – SMOKING is not permitted on or near our premises. Extinguish all cigarettes inside your vehicle upon arrival to our center. This includes VAPING, e-cigs and any others. _____

Birthday Parties are permitted if you have spoken with a teacher to plan beforehand. We require that **ONLY STORE-BOUGHT TREATS**, as well as natural fruit juices, be given to the children. _____

Child Abuse/Neglect will be reported to the proper authorities without hesitation, as required by law. _____

Incident Weather Closings will be determined by Pinellas County School Board. We will also post closings and updates on our Facebook Page and send alerts via Brightwheel. _____

Confidentiality will be maintained regarding your child and family. However, for us to be able to provide adequate care to your child, their file and information must be shared with our staff. _____

Handbook Review is done at the time of enrollment and is updated annually with management. _____

**Signature below verifies that these policies have been explained and are understood.
Refusal to comply with our policies may be grounds for termination from our program.**

Signature

Date

Non-Curricular Permissions and Release of Liability

We grant permission for our child to participate in group and individual pictures (including social media), individual scholastic evaluations including hearing and vision screenings and any other school related activities. _____

We authorize Lake Tarpon Learning Center to obtain medical treatment for my/our child in the event of injury and/or illness and agree to pay any expense incurred for treatment. _____

When/if my child is enrolled in or ages into the before and/or after school program, I **grant permission** for LTLC to transport my child to/from school as planned/discussed at the time of yearly enrollment. This means that I am aware that center staff will pickup and/or drop off my child in the center's approved vehicles each day, according to our center and school schedule. _____

If transportation to/from Lake Tarpon Learning Center is necessary for the safety of our child, we understand that under present law, if any child is involved in an accident while riding in a private passenger vehicle, he/she may be covered for bodily injury under their family automobile policy. We agree to submit any medical bills incurred to our insurance company for payment. If our policy has been issued with a deductible clause relative to personal injury protection, we understand that we have assumed that deductible amount. Lake Tarpon Learning Center will not be responsible for deductible or coverage costs. Additionally, all Lake Tarpon Learning Center staff will not be responsible for my deductible or primary coverage costs. NOTE: The undersigned and the student agree to assume all risk of injury that may occur due to normal daily activities, such as playing on playground equipment, etc. _____

We give permission to any member of the staff at Lake Tarpon Learning Center to contact the child's physician listed previously in the case of an emergency and a parent cannot be reached. _____

Food Experience Permission

I give permission for my child _____ to participate in food related activities. Please check one of the following:

- _____ My child DOES NOT have a food allergy or dietary restriction.
- _____ My child DOES have a food allergy or dietary restriction. He or she may participate, but may not eat or handle the following items (please list): _____
- _____ My child DOES have a food allergy or dietary restriction. He/she may not participate in activities.

My signature below indicates that I have received, read, and fully understand the Lake Tarpon Learning Center Parent Handbook including our guidance & discipline policy, our non-curricular permission and release of liability section, AND the food experience permission sections above.

Signature

Date

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OPTION: also use the back of the last page to add if you'd like to share more (i.e. child health, medical, developmental information, needs or history, home/family practices, etc.). Sample questions here will help us prepare to care for your child better!

What language(s) is spoken at home?

What are some of your child's favorite activities or interests?

How do they typically react in a new environment/situation?

Any special needs or require any accommodations?

Any cultural or religious practices that your family follows that we should be aware of?

Past school/childcare experiences/notes?

Some strategies that work well when they are upset/frustrated?

Other information?

Any fears or anxieties we should know about?



CHILD'S ENROLLMENT RECORD

DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY
Date enrolled _____

Child's full legal name _____
First Middle Last Nickname

Date of Birth _____ Sex _____

Primary Hours of Care From _____ To _____ Days of Week in Care _____

Child's Physical Address _____
Street Address (number, apartment #, street) City State Zip Code

Family Information: Child Lives with _____

Parent's Name _____ Parent's Name _____

Address: _____ Address _____

Home Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Employer: _____ Employer: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

Email Address _____ Email Address _____

Work Phone _____ Cell _____ Work Phone _____ Cell _____

Custody: Mother _____ Father _____ Both _____ Other _____ Name _____

Emergency Contacts:

Child will be released only to the custodial parent or legal guardian and the persons listed below. The following people will also be contacted and are authorized to remove the child from the children's center in case of illness, accident or emergency, **if for some reason the custodial parent(s) or legal guardian(s) cannot be reached:**

Name _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Address _____
Street Address (number, apartment #, street) City State Zip Code

Name _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Address _____
Street Address (number, apartment #, street) City State Zip Code

Please use additional sheet of paper to list name, address and phone number of any other people authorized to pick the child up.

CHILD'S ENROLLMENT RECORD

(Back Page)

**Florida Shot Form Expires: _____

**Florida Physical Form Expires: _____

Medical Information:

Child's Physician/Health Resource _____

Telephone Number _____

Address _____
Street Address (number, apartment #, street) City State Zip Code

Hospital Preference _____

Name of Dentist _____ **Telephone** _____

Address _____
Street Address (number, apartment #, street) City State Zip Code

Meals typically served while in care: Breakfast AM Snack Lunch PM Snack Supper

Emergency Care Plan instructions (if applicable) _____

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

List all known allergies _____

List all identifying scars, birthmarks, skin discolorations _____

Special medical or dietary needs of child _____

List any areas of concern _____

My signature below verifies that:

I give permission to consult the child's physician/health resource listed above in case of emergency if parent/legal guardian cannot be reached.

I have received a copy of the "Know Your Child's Children's Center" brochure.

I was notified in writing of the disciplinary and expulsion policies used by the children's center.

I was provided the food and nutrition policies used by the children's center.

Your signature below indicates that you have received the above items and that the information on this enrollment form is complete and accurate. I hereby grant permission for the staff of this facility to have access to my child's records.

Signature of Custodial Parent or Legal Guardian _____ **Date** _____

Ensure that this form is filled out completely - placing an N/A when intentionally left blank.



EMERGENCY MEDICAL RELEASE

This form must contain only one child's name, and be the original notarized form.

A new notarized form is required when there is a change in legal guardianship.

Please Print Information

Child's Full Name: _____ Birthdate: _____

Allergies: _____

Medicines Routinely Taken: _____

Name of Custodial Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s): _____

Address: _____
Street Address (number, apartment #, street) City State Zip Code

Home Telephone _____ Cell Telephone _____ Work Telephone _____

Family Physician's Name/Health Care Resource: _____

Address: _____
Street Address (number, apartment #, street) City State Zip Code

Telephone () _____

Hospital Preference: _____
Name City

Medical Insurance Company: _____

Policy #: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Emergency Contact (if custodial parent/guardian cannot be reached): _____

Address: _____
Street Address (number, apartment #, street) City, State, Zip Code

Home Telephone _____ Cell Telephone _____ Work Telephone _____

Sign in the presence of the Notary.

I hereby give my consent to any emergency facility and physician to administer necessary treatment to my child _____, in the event of an emergency at which time I cannot be reached. I give consent to transport by ambulance if situation warrants it.

(Child's Full Name)

Signature of Custodial Parent/Legal Guardian (Affiant)

STATE OF FLORIDA COUNTY OF _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ 20_____
(Month) (Day) (Year)

by means of physical presence or online notarization by _____ who is personally known
(Name of Affiant)

to me or has produced _____ as identification.
(Type of identification)

SEAL OF NOTARY

Signed: _____ (Signature of Notary)