



# Family Handbook

# Table of Contents

## **Guiding Principles**

- Welcome Letter
- Program Philosophy
- Curriculum Goals

## **General Information**

- Enrollment Procedures
- Hours of Operation
- Holiday Closures
- Weather Related Closures
- Programs
- Ratios
- Licensing

## **Parent Expectations**

- Arrival Procedures
- Procedures for the Release of Children
- Emergency Contacts & Alternative Pick-Ups
- Family Disputes / Custody Agreements
- Visitors
- Confidentiality
- Absences
- Parent Code of Conduct

## **Financial**

- Tuition
- Vacation
- Tuition Assistance
- Withdrawal from Services
- Termination of Services

## **Health & Safety**

- Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect
- Illness Exclusion
- Fire and Other Emergency Drills
- Health Checks
- Hearing and Vision Screening
- Vaccines and Preventable Diseases
- Communicable Diseases
- COVID-19
- Dispensing and Handling Medication

# Table of Contents

## **Health & Safety**

- Medical Emergencies
- Incident and Accident Reports
- Insect Repellent and Sunscreen
- Nap and Rest Time
- Infant Sleep Safety
- Diaper Changing and Potty Training
- Restroom Policy

## **Food & Nutrition**

- Meals and Food Service
- Chest Feeding
- Outside Food and Snacks
- Children with Severe Allergies
- Peanuts

## **Parent Involvement**

- Parent Participation
- Volunteers
- Parent-Teacher Conferences

## **General Policies**

- Discipline and Guidance
- Behavior
- Biting
- Dress Code
- Staff Employment by Client
- Transportation
- Outdoor Play
- Water Activities
- Cameras and Photography
- Items from Home
- Firearms and Weapons
- Gang-Free Zone



# Welcome to Little Dreamers!

We are a family-owned and operated child care center where all families will feel safe and loved. Not only do we provide a family environment, we also provide a balanced learning experience. From digging in the sand to letter recognition, your child will have the opportunity to learn it all!

Little Dreamers is a place where everyone is welcomed and respected individually. Enrollment is perceived without regard for race, religion, nationality, orientation, origin, gender or sex. Our promise to you is that, above all else, you will be loved here.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide our families with as much information as possible about our daily operations, procedures, and policies. Upon enrollment, there are several documents you must provide before they can attend the facility. Please review this handbook thoroughly and familiarize yourself with our operational procedures and policies. All forms must be completed before your child's first day!

*Samantha Webb*

Owner & Director



# Program Philosophy

At Little Dreamers Learning Center, we strive to aid in creating emotionally capable and intelligent students. Studies show that students who are equipped with self-awareness, coping mechanisms, and likewise lead more productive and healthier lifestyles. Our program will utilize conscious discipline methods and mimic gentle parenting techniques.

# Curriculum Goals

Little Dreamers Learning Center provides individualized curriculum and lessons to each student. All children will have a daily opportunity for growth in areas of development including social & emotional, fine & gross motor, cognitive & intellectual, and speech & language. They will also be provided with opportunities for areas of play such as physical, dramatic, open - ended, sensory, nature, and music & art.



# General Information



## Enrollment Procedures

To enroll at Little Dreamers, parents/guardians must complete a tour of the facility. We offer in person and virtual tours. Upon completion of the tour, you will be given a registration packet that must be returned at least 1 business day before you would like for your child to attend.

## Hours of Operation

Little Dreamers is open Monday through Friday from 6:00am to 6:30pm and is closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

## Holiday Closures

Little Dreamers will be closed on the following days:

New Years Day (Observed)  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Juneteenth  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving  
Black Friday  
Christmas Eve  
Christmas Day

Holidays that land on a Saturday or Sunday will be observed on an alternative day or days during the week before or after the holiday. Anytime the center will be closed, a notice will be posted in the lobby as a reminder.

Tuition is due regardless of center closures or attendance.

Little Dreamers holiday closure calendar will be posted yearly in the lobby area for viewing and reference. **Holiday closures are subject to change.** If any changes occur in any closures, we will post the change in the lobby for advanced notice.

# Weather Closures

Little Dreamers will use their best discretion for determining weather related closures. Most of the time, we will follow the direction of Pearland ISD. The Director and/or Assistant Director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. In the event that Little Dreamers closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation. Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel home safely.

Tuition is due regardless of weather related closures.

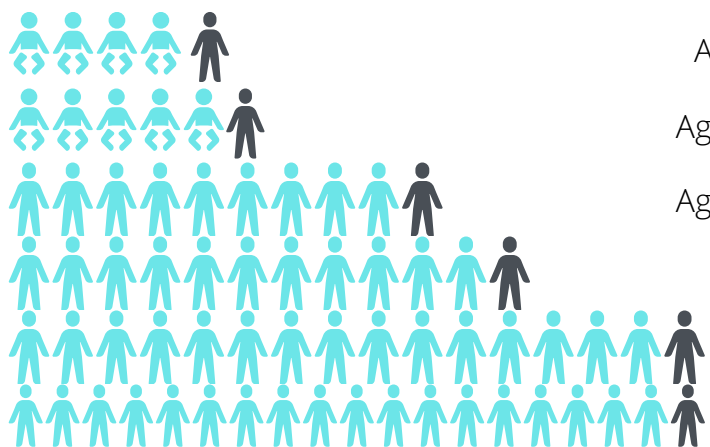
## Programs

There are four programs offered at Little Dreamers. They are as follows...

- Raindrops 6 weeks - 18 months
- Dream Clouds 18 - 24 months
- Shooting Stars 2-3 years
- Rainbows 3-5 years (must be potty trained)

## Ratios

Little Dreamers maintains the following staff-to-child ratios at all times in our classrooms:



|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Age: 0-11 months  | Children per 1 Staff: 4  |
| Age: 12-17 months | Children per 1 Staff: 5  |
| Age: 18-23 months | Children per 1 Staff: 9  |
| Age: 2 years      | Children per 1 Staff: 11 |
| Age: 3 years      | Children per 1 Staff: 15 |
| Age: 4 years      | Children per 1 Staff: 18 |

## Licensing

Little Dreamers is a public program voluntarily licensed by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. A copy of Minimum Standards is available on the web at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov>. A copy of our most recent licensing report can be found in the lobby.





# Parent Expectations



## Arrival Procedures

At Little Dreamers, we believe that a stable and predictable environment enables children to thrive. The policies we have placed for our daily routines, such as arrivals and departures, meal times, nap times, and toileting are to ensure consistency.

### **Checking In:**

Upon arrival, all students must be signed in electronically using the tablet located in the lobby, or by scanning the posted QR code. Parents are required to sign their child in *and* out everyday.

Children are required to be escorted to their designated classrooms by their parent(s)/guardian(s) or adult (18 years of age or older). Children are required by law to be supervised at all times while in the child care facility. Put away all personal belongings in your child's cubby or designated area. Allowing the child to do this, when able, helps to encourage independence. After putting away all personal items, the designated drop-off persons should then take the child to an area where a Little Dreamers staff member is actively supervising children. All drop-off persons must be certain that a Little Dreamers staff member sees and acknowledges the child before they leave. Drop off persons may not leave the child in a room with other drop off persons. Drop off persons must **always** leave the child in the care of a Little Dreamers staff member.

In order to benefit from planned curriculum and activities, all children must arrive by **10:00am**. Children will not be admitted into care after 10:00am. Children who are late due to a scheduled appointment with a health care provider and/or with prior permission from the Director and/or Assistant Director may be allowed after 10:00am. However, no children will ever be admitted during the center's nap/rest period (12-2). Late arrival is a disruption to the classroom and other children and may break the established routine of the classroom.

### **Health Checks:**

Parents/Guardians are required to notify the center of any special instructions or needs required throughout the child's day. The parent/guardian must present said special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with the center. These special instructions may include Alternative pick-up, early pick-up, health issues over the previous night that need to be monitored, and/or any general issues of concern.



When sharing important information with the center staff during pick-up or drop-off, please be aware that the staff are not available for long conversations due to their classroom responsibilities. We value the importance of communication between parents and staff so if you need a few more minutes to talk to your child's teacher, please call or email us to schedule a parent-teacher conference. If the administrative staff can assist you, please stop by the front office.

Parents must drop off their child before 9:30am in order to be served breakfast. Breakfast will not be available or saved for any child arriving after 9:30am at any time.

**Notification of Absence:**

**Parents/guardians are required to notify the center by 9:30am if the child will be absent on any given day.** This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day. If the center is not notified of a child's absence, the center will contact the parent or guardian.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the center not only of the absence, but the nature of the illness. This enables our staff to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our center. The information you share will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center's administrative staff, so that the parents of the other children enrolled in the program can be notified that there was/is a communicable disease present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. Little Dreamers will take all measures necessary to protect your family's privacy.

**Right to Refuse Admission:**

Little Dreamers Learning Center reserves the right to refuse admission at any time to any child with or without cause. Possible reasons for the refusal of admission may include...

- The need to remain compliant with Minimum Standards
- Staff deems the child(ren) to ill to attend
- Domestic situations that present a safety risk to children and/or staff and other parents.
- **Parent's failure to maintain accurate, up-to-date records.**
- **Parent's failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.**

Families will not at any time be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the facility. Tuition is due regardless of attendance.

# Procedures for the Release of Children

Parents, guardians, or other authorized adults are required to sign the child out of the center electronically. Once this person signs the child out, they are solely responsible for supervising their child while on facility property. At no time, are children permitted to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms, and/or the playground. Pick up persons are required to handle all business issues prior to signing the child out of care for the day.

Parents/Guardians are required to take home all papers and belongings in the child's cubby or backpack each day. Parents, guardians, or designated pick-up persons are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at the time of pick up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or another authorized adult at pickup. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth conversation or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule a conference because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

## **Late Pickup:**

Our facility is licensed to care for children from 6:00 am to 6:30 pm. Parents must pick up their children no later than 6:30 pm. A parent is late picking up their child at 6:30 pm. All measurements of time are to be according to the Little Dreamers clock located at the front desk. If your child is present at 6:30pm, an initial **\$50** late fee will be applied to your account. You will also be charged an additional \$2 per minute after 6:35 pm. These fees will be due on the following Friday with your regular invoice. After 30 minutes, at 7:00pm, we are required by DFPS to contact the police to come and pick up the child.

Please obey the law and help maintain this policy.

## **Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick Up:**

The staff at Little Dreamers will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of Little Dreamers to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The Parent's Right to Immediate Access does not permit the facility from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, Little Dreamers will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police, and Child Protective Services. Any other authorized person who attempts to pick up a child and appears to the staff of Little Dreamers to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of Little Dreamers will contact the child's parents, local police, and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

Should a parent or authorized pick-up person appear to be impaired or under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, this will also result in termination of services.

# Emergency Contact & Alternative Pick-Ups

At enrollment, parents will complete emergency/alternate pick-up information on the Enrollment Form. Parents are encouraged to include, on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick up their child from Little Dreamers in an emergency situation, the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached, staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements will result in termination of services. Parents do not need to be listed on the emergency contact list. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick up their child.

Parents will be asked to determine with persons (if any) on the emergency/alternate pick up list have the right to act "in loco parentis" In Loco Parenti's status affords the pickup person the right to discuss confidential information about the child's day including but not limited to, incident/accident reports and behavior issues. In the absence of this designation, the people on the emergency/alternate pick-up list are only afforded the right to pick up the child. Staff is not permitted to discuss the child's day with them.

The persons on the emergency/alternate pick-up list will be required to provide a government-issued photo ID prior to the facility releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the emergency/alternate pick-up list must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form. Employees of Little Dreamers are prohibited from being listed on the emergency/alternate pickup list.

Little Dreamers reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the emergency/alternate contact list for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the emergency/alternate pickup list of the policies/procedures contained herein.

# Family Disputes & Custody Agreements

Little Dreamers will NOT get involved with custody disputes. Little Dreamers will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS REGARDLESS OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE STATUS.

In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police department will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, Little Dreamers has the right to terminate care.

## Visitors

In general, for the safety of the children and our caregivers, parents are only allowed to come into the children's play area when accompanied by a staff member. Parents may visit the child-care center at any time during our hours of operation to observe their child, program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without having to secure prior approval. Parents are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Little Dreamers as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Little Dreamers must be provided with a copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. **For the mental well being of the child, these "more liberal" variations may only be revoked once. If you give permission for such occurrences and take them away, you may not re-permit them.** In the case where both parents are offered shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for a more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with Little Dreamers, both parents shall be afforded equal and unrestricted access to their child as stipulated by law. Little Dreamers cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If the situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Little Dreamers suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's rights to immediate access. Little Dreamers staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Center's administrative staff and are allowed in the child care facility only at the discretion of the Center Director or Assistant Director. An employee of Little Dreamers will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the center. Little Dreamers will terminate services of any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon facility property.

Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, Little Dreamers cannot have a child at the school when the child's parent is prohibited access (such as being trespassed from the center). Little Dreamers will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the school. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

## Confidentiality

Withing Little Dreamers, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Little Dreamers who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child/children. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents/children will not be shared with parents, as Little Dreamers strives to protect everyone's right to privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, or other health-related information of anyone associated with Little Dreamers.

Outside of Little Dreamers confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by the law. Any parent who violates the Confidentiality Policy will not be permitted on facility property thereafter. Please refer to the policy regarding Parent's Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing school property.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child, however, Little Dreamers employees are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

## Absences

Parents are required to inform the center by **9:30am** if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day. If the parent does not notify the facility of a child's absence, the facility will contact the parent.

# Parent Code of Conduct

To ensure positive relationships between parents and members of staff that benefit each child's learning, development, and sense of security as well as to ensure mutual respect between staff and parents is maintained at all times, Little Dreamers has adopted these policies and standards of conduct.

Little Dreamers requires that parents of enrolled children behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect at all times. One of our most important goals is to provide the most appropriate and secure environment for children that encourages growth, learning, and development. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of employees and leadership at Little Dreamers, but it is also the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the school. The Center shall be a calm and positive place for children at all times. Any concerns a parent may have regarding a member of staff will be listened to outside of the classroom and, where needed, acted upon.

**Swearing/Cursing:** No parent or adult shall be permitted to curse or use any other inappropriate language when working in the classroom or playground. Such language will NOT be tolerated in the presence of the children or staff members.

**Inappropriate Attire:** Parents and staff members are expected to dress appropriately when in the building. Revealing clothing and beachwear should be avoided.

**Threats and Confrontation:** Threats of any kind toward Little Dreamers staff, other parents, or children will not be tolerated. While it is understood that all parents may not agree with the staff of Little Dreamers or the parents of other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited. Shouting, raising of voices, or any unwanted physical contact with a member of staff is considered inappropriate behavior. PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR OWN BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES. If it is deemed that a parent is acting in an inappropriate manner to a staff member or other parent, services for that family will be terminated.

With these policies in place, we hope to provide your child and family with a comfortable and safe environment as we help set the stage for a life full of learning ahead. We can only truly provide this with the help of each parent and adult who walks into our classroom. Little Dreamers promises to continue to work in partnership with parents to make learning fun.





# Financial



## Tuition

**All tuition fees are due the Friday before the week of service. Full tuition is due regardless of the number of days your child will actually attend. Upon enrollment, your tuition will be discussed with you; however, tuition fees are subject to change. Should your tuition fee change for any reason, you will be notified prior to the change being made.**

**Tuition is considered late if not received by 12:00am on the Saturday directly after the invoice was due. If all tuition fees are not paid 10:00am on Saturday, there will be an initial \$50 late fee, plus an additional \$10 per day late. If all tuition fees are not paid by 6:00am that Wednesday, the child/children will not be allowed to attend until the balance (including ongoing late fees) on your account is paid in full.**

**Tuition does not at any time roll over into the following week regardless of absences or closures. Your tuition fees are used to hold your child's spot in their absence. If the fees are not paid your child's spot is subject to be filled.**

**Little Dreamers charges a registration fee of \$100 per family. This fee is due in full at the time of registration. If the registration fee is not paid in full, enrollment may be denied. Registration fees are due yearly for re-registration. Little Dreamers occasionally offers specials that include a waived registration fee upon enrollment. If your initial registration fee is waived, you will still be required to pay the fee for re-registration. These fees are non-refundable.**

**Tuition can be paid only through Brightwheel by card or ACH withdrawal. There will be a \$50 fee applied to your account in the event of a returned payment.**

## Vacation

Once your child has been enrolled full time for 6 months, they will be allotted one week of vacation time per calendar year. In order to redeem your vacation week, you must submit a Vacation request form at least 2 weeks before the start of the vacation week. Little Dreamers does not allow vacation time to roll over into the next year.

If your vacation request is approved by the administrative staff, tuition will not be charged for that week. If your child takes more than one week of absence, you will need to withdraw and re-register your child, schedule a meeting with your Center Director to discuss your options, or submit payment as per usual.

# Tuition Assistance

Little Dreamers accepts NCI as a form of payment for tuition. For help applying talk to your Center Director. The following information is from the Texas Workforce Solutions website:

“Childcare-related matters can and often do affect the daily routine of parents in the workplace. Finding a way to pay for childcare so that parents can keep their jobs or train for better jobs, is a constant challenge for many working families. Workforce Solutions provides childcare financial aid for parents who are looking for work, working, and/or going to school.

Parents applying for childcare financial aid who are working, going to school, and/or looking for work may be added to a waiting list if funds are limited. When we have a waiting list, the wait time for childcare financial aid averages 2-3 months.”

## Withdrawal from Services

Little Dreamers requires a **2 week** written notice when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition will be refunded within 30 days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged for tuition for two additional weeks. **If these funds are not paid as per usual, the debt may be taken to Small Claims Court or sold to a collection agency.**

The parents and child, following their last day of enrollment, are not permitted to re-enter the facility property without prior permission of the Center Director. A withdrawn child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Center Director if they wish to return to the facility property following the last day of enrollment at Little Dreamers. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Center Director and are not a right to the withdrawn child or parent.

Parents who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment at Little Dreamers must submit a request to do so **2 weeks** in advance of the proposed change. Schedule change request forms can be requested from the administrative staff in the front office. The Center Director will either approve or deny the request based on the schedule availability within the center. If the request is denied because the schedule is not available, parents may choose to continue with the current schedule until such time as the requested schedule becomes available. The parent may also choose to withdraw their child from the program, given they abide by the Withdrawal policy.



# Termination of Services

Little Dreamers reserves the right to terminate services of any child at any time, with or without cause.

Parents will be refunded any unused tuition within two weeks of the dismissal. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the student's file or via the billing portal. Any balances remaining after the 30 day period will be referred to the school's legal counsel for collection.

The center administrative staff will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal. Parents are required to leave school property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately. Little Dreamers will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative while gathering their child's belongings upon dismissal.

A terminated child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Center Director if they wish to return to school property following termination of services. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Center Director and are not a right of the terminated child or parent(s). Following termination of services, any parent or child who harasses, threatens, or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the facility by calling, writing, or any other means will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, by Little Dreamers.

**BE ADVISED THAT LITTLE DREAMERS LEARNING CENTER HAS A 3 STRIKE BITING POLICY! 3 BITES IN 6 MONTHS THAT BREAK SKIN WILL BE GROUNDS FOR TERMINATION. BITING INCIDENTS WILL BE PROPERLY DOCUMENTED. ON YOUR 3RD BITING INCIDENT REPORT, YOUR FAMILY WILL BE PROVIDED WITH COPIES OF PRIOR BITING INCIDENT REPORTS ALONG WITH A TWO WEEK NOTICE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CARE AT ANOTHER FACILITY! The last thing we want to do is terminate your services. However, it is in the best safety interest of the other children that we keep biting incidents VERY MINIMAL!**





# Health & Safety



## Mandated Reporting

In Texas, anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being abused or neglected has a legal obligation to report it. 'Reasonable cause' does not require directly witnessing the abuse or neglect. Professional reporters are required to report within 48 hours of becoming aware of the concern.

### **Professional Reporters**

A Professional Reporter is anyone licensed or certified by the state or works for an agency or facility

licensed or certified by the state and has contact with children as a result of their normal duties. By law,

professionals may not delegate their duty to report to another person such as a coworker or family member.

Professional reporters include, but are not limited to:

- Medical facility staff
- Social workers
- School personnel
- Law enforcement
- Mental health professionals
- Officers of the court
- Daycare providers

It is the responsibility of professionals to report, and it is the responsibility of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to investigate allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

### **Definitions of Abuse and Neglect**

For legal definitions of abuse and neglect, please refer to the Texas Family Code. Below, you'll find DFPS' explanations of abuse and neglect based on the definitions found in the TFC.

### **Abuse**

#### **Physical abuse**

Deliberate actions resulting in injuries to a child or genuine threats of such actions or concerns about physical injuries of an unexplained or suspicious nature.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Includes:

- Sexual indecency, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
- Failing to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct to a child.
- Using the child for the creation of obscene or pornographic material.

## **Emotional Abuse**

An emotional or mental injury caused by the parent or caregiver that results in an observable effect on the child.

## **Psychological State**

Concerns about the child's mental stability, as demonstrated by mood, behavior, and thoughts.

## **Trafficking**

- Labor trafficking: Parent or caregiver forcing a child into labor or services that are unhealthy or harmful to the child.
- Sex trafficking: Parent or caregiver receiving compensation for forcing a child to engage in prostitution or sex acts.

## **Neglect**

### **Neglectful Supervision**

Placing the child in, or failing to remove a child from, a situation that:

- A reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities.
- Results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child.
- Exposes the child to a substantial risk of harmful sexual conduct.
- Exposes the child to sexual abuse committed against another child.

### **Medical Neglect**

Failure to seek, obtain or administer medical treatment that could result in substantial harm.

### **Physical Neglect**

Failure to provide a child with the necessary food, clothing, and shelter to maintain a healthy life.

## Abandonment

Requires both of the following components:

- Leaving a child in a situation that would expose the child to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm without arranging for necessary care for the child.
- A parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator of a child who shows no intent to return.

## Whom to Report

DFPS has jurisdiction to investigate when a child is abused or neglected by a parent or guardian. DFPS also investigates other perpetrators.

### **Please report to DFPS if one or more of the following people are believed to have abused or neglected a child:**

- parent, guardian, or foster parent.
- A member of the child's family, such as a grandparent or uncle, or a member of the child's household, such as an unrelated roommate of the parent.
- A parent's boyfriend or girlfriend, regardless of whether that person lives in the home.
- Personnel or a volunteer at the child's school.
- Personnel or a volunteer at a daycare or residential facility.

## Ways to Make a Report

- Call the Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400
- Submit a report online: Texas Abuse Hotline

## Illness Exclusion

Due to the health and well-being of each child at Little Dreamers, we will strictly adhere to the following illness and exclusion criteria:

- Fever as measured by a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher on the forehead
- **Same day vaccines (must remain home for the rest of the day after receiving vaccines)**
- Vomiting (two or more episodes in 24 hours)
- Swelling/redness of the throat
- Constant cough
- Extreme fatigue/lethargy
- Head lice (may return 24 hours after receiving removal and treatment)
- Reddened/draining eyes
- Unusual Skin rash
- Bumps on hands, feet, and/or throat
- Uncontrollable diarrhea (defined by 2 or more episodes in 24 hours and/or cannot be contained in a diaper.
- Mouth sores
- Diagnosis of a communicable disease by a healthcare professional with no medical documentation that the child is no longer contagious

If a child is suspected of having a contagious condition, a parent or authorized pick-up person must arrive at the childcare center as soon as possible, but not to exceed one hour after being called.

A child must be fever-free **and symptom-free without the use of fever relieving or other medications for a period of 24 hours** before they will be allowed to return to the center.

If a child is diagnosed as having a contagious condition, parents should notify Little Dreamers as soon as possible so we can alert other families. Confidentiality will be upheld.

The exclusion of a child from care is determined by:

- Whether or not the child can participate in the activities planned for the day in his/her age group including outdoor play
- Whether or not the child requires more care than the staff can provide without compromising the care needs of the other children at the center
- Whether keeping the child in care will pose an increased risk to other children and adults at the center

Little Dreamers reserves the right to exclude any family and/or child from the facility based on their sole discretion. Tuition is due regardless of absence.

## Fire & Other Emergency Drills

Little Dreamers conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, staff, and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their children into or out of the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director or designee will inform each classroom teacher that the facility will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick-up policy, children must be picked up within 1 hour of the telephone call.

Parents wishing to sign their child out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation are expected to have patience with the staff as they are trying to maintain order during an often hectic and dangerous situation. If the school is in the midst of a fire/emergency drill, parents will be required to wait until the drill is completed and the staff and children are returned to the building to sign their child out of the program. If the school is having a real fire/emergency situation, parents will be asked to wait until the director or center designee has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. Once again, it is important for parents and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the fire/emergency personnel and center administration during these important and critical situations. Parents may review the complete Little Dreamers Emergency Preparedness Plan posted in every classroom and on the Parent Communication Board.

## Health Checks

The health and well-being of each child at Little Dreamers is of the utmost importance to us, therefore we may conduct a daily health check before the parents leave. A health check is a visual or physical assessment of a child to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including signs or symptoms of illness and injury. The results of the health check will be determined by the center's staff, not the parent, on whether or not the child remains in care for that day.

If a staff member notices anything unusual they are required to point this out to the parent at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects. A Little Dreamers staff member may complete an "Incident Report" to document these situations.

If after drop-off, we observe any of the following symptoms, they will be sent home. These symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Excessively runny nose with or without green mucus
- Non-clear drainage from the nose or eyes
- Fever
- Excessive fatigue (is falling asleep during activities and is unable to participate effectively in the program)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Excessive coughing
- Inconsolable and inexplicable crying
- Any other symptom that affects a child's ability to participate in activities.

If your child is found to be exhibiting any of these symptoms OR symptoms of a communicable disease, we will ask that your child be picked up immediately. The time in which your child must stay home before returning to the center will depend on the discretion of the director.

## Hearing & Vision Screening

Hearing and Vision Screenings for possible vision and hearing problems are required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4 years old. Parents are required to bring in screening proof from their local pediatrician.

Parents are required to provide one of the following as documentation:

- The individual visual acuity and sweep check results
- A signed statement that the child's screening records are current and on file, at the pre-kindergarten program or school the child attends away from the center.
- An affidavit stating that the hearing or vision screening conflicts with the tenets or practices of a church or religious denomination of which the affiant is an adherent or member.

## Vaccines & Preventable Diseases

At Little Dreamers, caregivers are encouraged, but not required to obtain vaccinations for vaccine-preventable diseases. Employees are required to wear gloves while changing diapers or dealing with any bodily fluid and wash their hands to prevent the spread of diseases. All Little Dreamers employees are encouraged to receive an annual flu shot. A complete up-to-date immunization record must be provided for each child upon enrollment. **It is your responsibility to make sure the center has the most updated immunization record on file at all times.** Children who attend school are not required to provide our facility with an immunization record. **Children are not permitted to attend daycare if they have received vaccines that day. They may return the following day. This decision was made in cooperation with our insurance company after they deemed this a liability for the center! Furthermore, after receiving vaccines, children are often uncomfortable and should be allowed to rest at home.**

## Communicable Diseases

Little Dreamers follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics Model Health Policies and Procedures Manual.

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 1 hour of notification from the facility. If a parent is reached but cannot pick their child up within 1 hour, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. Little Dreamers reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return to the center if the administrative staff believes the child is too ill to participate in the program.

Children excluded from the program due to fever may not return to the facility until they are fever-free, without medication, for 24 hours. If your child is sent home due to a fever, he/she is not permitted to return to the facility the following day at a minimum. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or more.

Diarrhea is defined by stool that is more frequent or less formed than usual for that child and not associated with changes in diet. Exclusion is required for all diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper and toilet trained children if the diarrhea is causing "accidents". In addition, diapered children with diarrhea should be excluded if the stool frequency exceeds two stools above normal for that child during the time in the facility day or whose stool contains blood or mucus. Re-admission after diarrhea can occur when diapered children have the stool contained by the diaper and when toilet trained children are not having "accidents" and when stool frequency is no more than two stools above normal for that child during the facility day.

Parents will be notified at the time of pick up if their child has the presence of head lice. Parents of the affected child must treat the child for head lice before they can return to care.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the school director. This enables our staff to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at the facility. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center's administrative staff, so that the parents of the children in the center may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. Little Dreamers will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality.



# COVID - 19

Little Dreamers is keeping current on all CDC and Texas Health and Human Services recommendations. This plan is in place to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the safety of children, staff, and families. Social distancing with young children is a challenging effort. However, the policies set forth aim to keep children and adults safe and healthy, while ensuring children are in a nurturing and responsive environment. These guidelines are based on the best available public health data at this time, and the practical realities of managing a child care program; as new data and practices emerge, the policies may be updated. The goal of the Little Dreamers is to meet and exceed the standards whenever possible.

## **Planning**

- Little Dreamers created health and safety protocols to help protect staff, children, and family members. Individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness will limit time in the center in addition to following all health and safety precautions put in place.
- Events such as festivals, holiday events, and special performances will be postponed/canceled if infection rates are high.
- COVID-19 specific resources including information about social distancing, symptoms, Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome, and when to seek medical assistance will be provided to families. Families may request resources available in their preferred language.
- Signage promoting healthy practices including stopping the spread of germs and appropriate handwashing are posted throughout the facility.
- The classroom curriculum includes activities that promote health and model/educate children on handwashing, social distancing, and health and safety.
- While waiting for entry into the facility (and when in interior and exterior spaces) families and staff will maintain social distancing.
- Families are encouraged to limit the number of individuals with authorization to pick up and drop off from the facility. Whenever possible, the same adult should be dropping off and picking up. Those authorized should be informed of the center's procedures.

## **Personal Hygiene**

- Hand sanitation stations are conveniently located throughout the Center to allow for individuals to sanitize as needed after touching high-traffic services.
- Staff and children must follow recommended handwashing procedures. Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application, and use paper towels (or single-use cloth towels) to dry hands thoroughly. Hand washing procedures are posted at all sinks.
- All personal items will be labeled and stored in their individual cubby to ensure personal items are self-contained.

- Children's bedding (sheets and blankets, sleeping bags) will be stored in each child's cubby or bag.
- Bedding will be sent home weekly to be laundered by the family.
- All personal toys will remain at home.
- Families and classroom staff will use bathroom time as an opportunity to reinforce healthy habits and monitor proper handwashing.
- Families and staff will teach children to avoid contact with one's eyes, nose, and mouth, and use a tissue to wipe their nose and to cough/sneeze inside their elbow.
- Families and staff will model and practice handwashing before and after eating, after coughing or sneezing, after playing outside, and after using the restroom.

### **Arrival Procedures**

- Families are encouraged to wash their own hands and their child's hands before dropping off (i.e. at home), prior to coming for pick up, and as soon as they get home.
- When waiting for entry to the facility and while passing through the office and other shared spaces, families will follow social distancing protocol.
- All individuals entering the facility must sanitize their hands using the sanitizing stations. Sanitizing stations are located in classroom entries and high-traffic areas and are out of the reach of children. Families and children must wash their hands in the classroom sinks upon arrival.
- Whenever possible families and staff will meet at the designated classroom entryway to pick up and drop off children.
- Families and classroom staff must enter and exit through doorways one at a time to allow for social distancing. Individuals exiting a space will have the right-of-way.
- Whenever possible, the same parent should drop off and pick up the child every day. Those with authorization should be informed of the center's procedures for picking up and dropping off. Older or at risk-individuals are discouraged from picking up and dropping off children.
- In the classroom, staff, and families will keep interactions brief. Staff and families are encouraged to communicate via phone or email for extended conversations.

### **Health Screenings**

- The center will exclude any child, adult, or staff showing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Families should complete a health check on themselves and their children prior to arrival at the facility.
- Children and family members who are sick, exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed in the facility.
- Temperature screenings will take place for children and parents entering the facility. Temperatures will be taken using a no-contact thermometer which will be disinfected between each use. Individuals with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or over will not be admitted into the program.

- Upon arrival in the classroom, teachers will complete a visual health screening and will ask families questions about the child's health and well-being including COVID-19 related symptoms within the last 24 hours.
- Children will be monitored throughout the day for signs of illness. Children who become ill while in the program will be sent home. Parents will be contacted for pick up and will be required to pick up or have a designated representative to pick up within one hour.
- Parents must disclose any COVID-19 symptoms within the last 24 hours and whether anyone in their home has had COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test.
- Children must be fever-free without the aid of medication for 24 hours before returning to care if no other COVID-19 symptoms are present, for 48 hours if other COVID-19 symptoms are present.

### **Children Showing Symptoms of COVID-19**

If a child is showing symptoms of COVID-19, the parents will be called to pick up their child.

The child may return to child care if:

- The child has not had a known risk of exposure, and
- The parents have sought medical advice and their child has been released to come back to childcare

### **COVID - 19 Symptoms**

In addition to temperature screenings, staff will provide health checks for children entering the program.

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or Runny Nose
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

## **Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C)**

The CDC identified the MIS-C which is associated with COVID-19. Families and staff will be trained to identify the following symptoms which will exclude the child from child care. All children may not have all the same symptoms.

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Neck pain
- Rash
- Bloodshot eyes
- Feeling extra tired
- Trouble breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

## **Confirmed Case of COVID-19**

If a COVID-19 case is confirmed in a child or staff member, the individual's classroom will be closed to allow for the following procedures:

- Families will be called to pick up all the children in the classroom used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
- Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible for respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as the classroom, bathrooms, and materials.
- If more than seven days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfecting are not necessary. Continue routine cleaning and disinfecting.

If an individual becomes ill due to COVID-19, they may return only after being released by a medical professional, and under the following circumstances:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since the individual last had a fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- The individual no longer has respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) and
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Little Dreamers will work cooperatively with Federal and Local authorities to document/track incidents of possible exposure and notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any possible case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### **Closing the Center During a COVID-19 Surge**

- We reserve the right to close the center as necessary if there is a surge of COVID-19 cases in our area.
- We reserve the right to deny parents from entering the facility if there is a surge of COVID19 cases in our and surrounding communities.
- We reserve the right to close a classroom if we are unable to staff it appropriately due to a case of COVID-19

### **Child Care Credits**

Little Dreamers Learning Center is dedicated to remaining open as much as possible. We will no longer be closing down the center and/or classrooms for confirmed cases of COVID-19 **unless** a staffing shortage is caused by the confirmed case or cases. In the event of a staffing shortage due to COVID-19, we may need to close down a classroom or the center for 5-10 days. As usual, Little Dreamers Learning Center will **not** apply credits for childcare during COVID-19 related closures or absences. We will no longer be making exceptions to this policy for any reason. Tuition is due regardless of attendance or closure for any reason.

### **Withdrawal**

If you choose to withdraw your child, a **2-week** written notice must be provided to the Director prior to the last day of attendance. Please ask for the Withdrawal Form at the front desk. Pre-paid childcare fees shall be reimbursed if written notice is provided to the director at least **2 weeks** prior to the last day of attendance. The registration fee is non-refundable.

### **Termination of Services**

Refusal to follow the guidelines established in this addendum can be grounds for termination of services. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Failure to comply with hand sanitizing procedures upon arrival to the center.
- Failure to accurately disclose symptoms and/or illnesses.
- Administering fever-reducing medications without notifying the center.
- Repeated exposure to COVID-19.

# Dispensing & Handling Medication

## Dispensing

- Little Dreamers will administer medication in its original container when parents give authorization by completing and signing a Medical Authorization Form.
- Little Dreamers **WILL NOT** administer symptom controlling medications such as 'Cough & Cold', 'Tylenol' or 'Pepto' unless a written not from a health care professional is provided stating that the child is both free of contagion risk and specifies that the symptom controlling medication is necessary and does not impede the ability to determine contagion risks.
- If a Medical Authorization Form is not signed in advance, no more than a single dose of parent-provided medication can be administered with phone approval from the parent and a Medical Authorization Form must be signed upon return.
- Authorization to administer medication expires on the first anniversary of the date the authorization is provided.
- Little Dreamers is not authorized to administer medication in excess of the medication's label instructions or the directions of the child's health care professional.
- Parent authorization is not required to administer a medication to a child in a medical emergency to prevent the death or serious bodily injury of the child provided that Little Dreamers administers the medication as prescribed, directed, and intended.
- If children need symptom suppressants such as 'Cold & Cough', 'Pepto', 'Tylenol' or similar medications to attend or be comfortable at daycare, they should not attend daycare.

## Handling

- All medication will be stored out of reach from children in a locked storage safe and may NOT be left in a child's backpack or classroom. **This includes tylenol, bug bite cream, etc!**
- Medication will be stored so it does not contaminate food
- Little Dreamers will refrigerate medication (if required)

## Medical Emergencies

For an illness or injury that requires the immediate attention of a health care professional Little Dreamers will:

- Contact emergency medical services if needed (or take the child to the nearest emergency room after we have ensured the supervision of other children in the group);
- Give the child first-aid treatment or CPR when needed;
- Contact the child's parent

# Incident & Accident Reports

At Little Dreamers, precautions will be made to minimize accidents and ensure the safety of the children. We cannot be responsible for injuries that are out of our control which includes, but is not limited to:

- Incidents by one child due to the actions of another child like biting, hitting, pushing, and throwing objects
- Incidents by contact with furniture or objects
- Incidents to fingers from doors and containers
- Accidents while playing indoors and/or in the outdoor play area

If an injury occurs, after tending to the child, the parent will be contacted depending on the severity of the injury. Parents will need to sign an incident report for all injuries that leave a mark, no matter the severity when the child is picked up. If an incident occurs by one child due to the actions of another child, we cannot give parents information about who injured whom for confidentiality purposes, but a report will need to be signed by both sets of parents.

# Nap & Rest Times

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children under 5 years of age who remain at Little Dreamers for 6 or more hours a day, and for all children who show a need for a nap or rest time. Your child will be provided a cot to rest on during naptime. Please provide a clean blanket labeled with your child's full first and last name for naptime. Blankets will be sent home every Friday for washing. You may also bring a special blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal if desired. All items bought for naps must fit into your child's cubby. Nap and rest times are required by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing. Due to these requests, parents cannot at any time request that their child is exempt from a nap or rest time, or that their child's nap or rest time be shortened or lengthened.

# Infant Sleep Safety

Little Dreamers follows Infant Sleep Safety Guidelines as outlined in the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers and as outlined by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. All cribs at Little Dreamers meet the CPSC safety guidelines. Crib compliance documents are on posted above each crib in the classrooms and can be viewed at all times.

**PACIFIER CLIPS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE CENTER!**

Infants not yet able to turn over on their own must be placed in a face-up sleeping position in the infant's own crib. To avoid suffocation, nothing is allowed in the crib with the infant, including blankets, bottles, and stuffed animals. Sleep positioning devices are prohibited. For any exception to sleep positions and/or positioning devices, parents will need to complete a Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a healthcare professional stating that a different sleeping position for the child is medically necessary. Pacifiers are allowed, however, straps that are attached to the child's clothing and pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are prohibited. Amber and other teething necklaces are also prohibited as they pose an extreme choking hazard.

## Diaper Changing & Potty Training

### **Diaper Changing**

Little Dreamers changes all diapers (both disposable and cloth) regularly while the children are in our care. Parents must provide diapers/changing supplies for their children. If cloth diapers are being used, we ask parents to bring a bag that closes to store soiled diapers.

Little Dreamers employees will change diapers according to Subchapter R, Health Practices, Division 2, Diaper Changing of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers. Caregivers will document diaper changes that take place while children are in our care.

### **Potty Training**

During the school year, you may feel your child is ready for potty training. Some of the common signs of readiness include:

- The child can tell you in simple language that he/she recognizes they need to use the potty before they begin to go.
- Stays dry for long periods of time (can hold his/her urine and bowel movement).
- Can recognize when their diaper is soiled or wet.
- Initiates interest in using the potty and asks for underwear.
- Wants to be independent and is open to learning the process.

**We ask you to begin teaching your child at home during a weekend or break from school. Please discuss with your child's teacher before coming to school with the change from diaper to pull-up or underwear. We recommend waiting until potty training has been successful at home for 2-3 weeks.**

**Little Dreamers and it's staff are NOT responsible for the potty training of your child. We will put forward our best efforts to aid and support your efforts at home. However, your child not being potty trained in your desired time frame is not, nor should it be the responsibility of our team members.**



During the school day, your child:

- Will need to tell us he/she needs to go potty before they begin to go.
- Can undress and pull up their own pants/shorts. The teacher will assist, but your child should be working on being able to pull up underwear and clothing independently.
- Be able to wipe themselves. The teacher will assist, but your child should be working on being able to pull up underwear and clothing independently.
- Be able to wash and dry hands.

#### Cloth Underwear

We realize using cloth underwear is recommended for potty training since a child can feel when they are wet or soiled. We will be supportive of families who use them. HOWEVER, if your child has potty accidents for two school days in a row (keeping in mind if your child attends either an MWF or a T/Th schedule), we will ask you to provide pull-ups. This ensures we keep the classroom sanitary and safe for the other children attending school.

**If your child's clothing becomes soiled with urine, feces, vomit, or other bodily fluids we must bag and send home AS IS. We are not permitted to handle, rinse, or dump any bodily fluids.**

#### Clothing Requirements

**Please dress your child in clothing that is easy to take on and off. Elastic waists, like sweatpants, are easiest to manage. Please do not dress your child in long dresses or tights that are difficult to manage and keep dry. Likewise, overalls, bib-type clothing, one-piece outfits, and clothing with snaps and zippers should not be worn as your child learns to use the potty.**

## Restroom Policy

- Children in the three-year-old classes and older MUST BE POTTY TRAINED.
- Children in the three-year-old class and older should not be in disposable diapers or disposable undergarments of any kind.
- Please help your child work on the personal hygiene skills of wiping themselves and pulling up their own pants. Working on these self-help skills at home ensures that your child will not encounter problems while at school.
- Accidents can occur at school, please make sure your child has a complete change of clothes in his/her bag. Please make sure the clothing is labeled and weather-appropriate. **Little Dreamers team members are not responsible for your child having accidents. The restroom is accessible 100% of the time.**
- Although many classrooms have shared restrooms located in classrooms, children are expected to respect each other's privacy. Only one child will be allowed in the restroom at a time.
- If your child is having difficulty mastering using the toilet, please ensure your child has used the restroom prior to arriving at school for the day.
- If a child has an accident while at school, we will help them change into clean clothing. Wet/soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home for cleaning.
- We realize children may have occasional accidents, however, if a child continues to have "accidents" on a daily or more frequent basis we will call the parent to come to school and assist in the changing and cleaning of the child. On rare occasions, a child may need to stay home a few days to master toilet training before returning to school.





# Food & Nutrition



## Meals & Food Service

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide notification, in the form of a doctor's note, of any allergies, with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policies contained herein for further information. Parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions. (i.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat-free/gluten-free diets.) Little Dreamers never uses food as a punishment. All meals are served family-style. Children will never be denied or delayed participation in meals for behavioral reasons.

### **Meals**

At Little Dreamers, parents will have the option to provide their children's food or allow their children to eat our breakfast, lunch, and PM Snack. Meals are scheduled to be served once in the morning, afternoon and evening and are included in the price of service.

Little Dreamers is a **PEANUT FREE** facility, as such, it will not provide any peanut products and will also inform parents not to provide peanut products for their children's meals and snacks. However, some products served at Little Dreamers are produced in facilities that may also produce nut products.

All meals are served family-style with children sitting at tables to promote good manners, eating habits, and socialization skills. Staff will encourage children to eat their main entree first, followed by healthy sides.

### **Food Service and Preparation**

All food and drinks will be of safe quality and will be stored, prepared, distributed, and served under sanitary and safe conditions as monitored by the Health and Human Services Department.

### **Infants**

Parents are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child on a monthly basis, or as the child's feeding requirements change. Staff will complete a daily chart for each child detailing for the parent what the child ate when they ate, and how much they ate.

## Chest Feeding

Little Dreamers has a chest feeding nook located in the building that enables a person to chest feed their child while in our care. In addition, parents have the right to provide chest milk for their children. Please label all chest milk with the infant's first name, last initial, and date of expression.

## Outside Food & Snacks

Little Dreamers strongly discourages parents from sending their child/children to the center with food or snacks from home. Little Dreamers will make exceptions to this policy for extenuating circumstances such as allergies when the parent or guardian provides documentation from a health care professional or dietitian that special accommodations are necessary for your child's health.

Little Dreamers is a peanut-free facility.

## Children with Food Allergies

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide an allergy plan detailing any allergies from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This plan must be completed by the child's physician. This plan must be updated as needed.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein.

## Peanut Free Zone

Due to the extreme nature of allergic reactions to nuts and products containing nuts in some children, Little Dreamers prohibits nuts and/or foods containing nut products on center property, and/or at facility sponsored events. These peanut allergies can be so severe that exposure to peanuts can result in an anaphylactic reaction. An allergic child can have a reaction from simply smelling peanuts on someone's breath or touching peanut oil residue left on a counter-top, not only from consuming peanuts or peanut products. Due to the possibility of cross-contamination, (this occurs when one food is prepared with items previously used to prepare foods with nuts or nut products), Little Dreamers does not allow homemade snacks at the center. While we understand that parents enjoy providing homemade snacks for birthdays and holidays, we must be mindful of the safety of all children enrolled.





# Parent Involvement



## Parent Participation

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the child care center. Parents may volunteer to read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted in their classrooms any volunteer opportunities available. Parents who are not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items.

## Volunteers

Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions, and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips.

Parents with court orders detailing custody arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody as per the court order or with written permission from the custodial parent.

## Parent - Teacher Conferences

Parents are welcomed and invited to share concerns with teaching and administrative team members. Parents must communicate these concerns in accordance with our Parent Expectations policies. Open communication with parents is very important to children's success. Little Dreamers has multiple ways of communicating with parents such as Bright Wheel, Email, Phone Calls, and Face-to-Face. Parents may also request a conference with teaching and/or administrative team members. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Signing such documents is not an admission or agreement in any way, yet an acknowledgment that communication took place. Failure to sign documents is grounds for immediate termination of services.





# General Policies



## Discipline & Guidance

Little Dreamers uses positive methods of discipline and guidance.

Discipline will be individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver will use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

Little Dreamers will not use harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child.

## Behavior

Little Dreamers is dedicated to working with families whose children may need additional support and will make reasonable accommodations to their policies, practices, and procedures as appropriate in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Little Dreamers is not required by law to fundamentally alter or change the services provided for a child displaying dangerous/inappropriate behavior, developmental delays, and/or disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Little Dreamers Learning Center is not responsible for your child's behavior. Our team policies as well as our discipline and guidance policies are created and followed with research, standards, and laws in mind. We understand that your child may not display behaviors at home that they display here. However, that does not mean that they should not be redirected.**

Little Dreamers will allow outside resources/therapists into the program to work with any child as needed, provided those services are communicated in advance, the provider of these services has the appropriate clearances to be in the building, the behavioralist/therapeutic plan is shared with the administrative staff.

Should the resource/therapist become disruptive to the program or not have the ability to mitigate the child's dangerous behaviors through appropriate therapeutic methods, the child may be excluded from the program. Any child who is a safety threat to themselves or to others will be subject to suspension/exclusion and/or termination from the program if the dangerous behavior cannot be eliminated through reasonable accommodations provided under the applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Temporary suspension from the school may be necessary for the safety of the child and others while any appropriate evaluations are completed and/or while securing the appropriate support services from the appropriate agency.

Through formal and informal conferences with the teachers and administrators, written incident and accident reports and letters, Little Dreamers will communicate with parents/guardians of children exhibiting behaviors that are dangerous to themselves or to others, the steps taken to accommodate the child, and notifications that the child will not be permitted to return to the program until support services are in place.

Little Dreamers reserves the right to terminate services for any child or family that hits, bites, scratches, or shows any other methods of aggressive behaviors towards themselves or any other person. We also reserve the right to terminate services for any child or family if the administrative staff feels that the party creates an unsafe environment for themselves, other students, and/or staff members at the facility for any reason at any time.

Little Dreamers reserves the right to suspend or terminate services for any child or family that displays aggressive behaviors in the form of biting at any time for any reason.

## 3 Strike Biting Policy

Little Dreamers recognizes that biting is developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant room through 2 1/2-year-old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bitten or will bite another child. The staff understands that the parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is constantly working to identify situations that provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior. Little Dreamers will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with our staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. Uncooperative parents will have their child's services terminated. **If a child bites 3 times in a 6-month time frame, your family will be given a 2 week notice to make other care arrangements.**

Children older than 3 years may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use discipline procedures outlined in the discipline section of this handbook. The staff will also observe the child determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with the staff to help their children control this behavior. Uncooperative parents will have their child's services terminated. **Furthermore, children in the older age groups who bite 3 times in a 6 month time frame will have their services terminated since the safety of all the children in the program is of the utmost concern of Little Dreamers.**

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of Little Dreamers cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by a physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

Little Dreamers reserves the right to suspend or terminate services for any child or family that displays aggressive behaviors in the form of biting at any time for any reason.

## Dress Code

Parents are required to be dressed in appropriate clothing while at the center or involved in any center sponsored events. Inappropriate clothing would include revealing, extremely short, ripped/torn (in inappropriate places), and/or see-through articles of clothing. Anything with suggestive or vulgar language is prohibited.

Parents wearing high heels, work boots, or shoes with wet/dirty soles, will be required to remove their shoes prior to entering any classroom. This will reduce the risk of injury to a child on the floor and will help to maintain a clean floor. Parents can simply leave their shoes outside of the classroom door prior to entering the classroom.

# Staff Employment by Client

The staff of Little Dreamers are prohibited from being employed by any client (current or former). Parents are prohibited from soliciting any staff member for the purpose of employment. Parents who employ Little Dreamers staff will have their services terminated and any tuition or registration fees will be forfeited. Staff who become employed by current or former clients of Little Dreamers will have their employment with Little Dreamers terminated. All team members at Little Dreamers have signed non-compete contracts and may face legal ramifications for violating this contract.

Employment refers to any relationship outside of the facility's services that involves an employee interacting with current or former clients. Such relationships include but are not limited to babysitting, house sitting, mother's helper, nanny services, and carpooling regardless of whether or not those services are voluntary or paid.

Employees of Little Dreamers are prohibited from participating in social networking relationships with clients of Little Dreamers. This includes but is not limited to accepting or requesting friend requests on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, or Instagram.

## Transportation

Little Dreamers does not provide transportation at this time.

## Field Trips

Little Dreamers does not offer field trips at this time.

## Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. You **may not** request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at the facility. **Children MUST wear CLOSE - TOED shoes WITH BACKS.** Little Dreamers Learning Center will make exceptions to shoe requirements for sensory related resistance if the parent is willing to collaborate on the effort.

Outdoor play also provides a chance to practice social and emotional skills with other children, including problem solving, turn taking, encouragement, self-control, safe risk taking, and following the rules of a game. Outdoor play time is unstructured. We believe children should be provided ample opportunity to exercise free decision making and imagination. Our outdoor play time is the best time to provide this to them. On the following page, you will find charts that outline when and for how long our students will play outdoors each day. In the event they cannot play outside, the children will be provided extra Music & Movement time in their designated classroom. Each classroom will be provided with 30 minutes of outdoor play in the AM time period, as well as an additional 30 minutes in the PM time period. Time spent outdoors is subject to change due to weather.



# Child Care Weather Watch

## Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)

|                 |     | Wind Speed in mph |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----------------|-----|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                 |     | Calm              | 5   | 10  | 15  | 20  | 25  | 30  | 35  | 40  |
| Air Temperature | 40  | 40                | 36  | 34  | 32  | 30  | 29  | 28  | 28  | 27  |
|                 | 30  | 30                | 25  | 21  | 19  | 17  | 16  | 15  | 14  | 13  |
|                 | 20  | 20                | 13  | 9   | 6   | 4   | 3   | 1   | 0   | -1  |
|                 | 10  | 10                | 1   | -4  | -7  | -9  | -11 | -12 | -14 | -15 |
|                 | 0   | 0                 | -11 | -16 | -19 | -22 | -24 | -26 | -27 | -29 |
|                 | -10 | -10               | -22 | -28 | -32 | -35 | -37 | -39 | -41 | -43 |



Comfortable for out door play



Caution



Danger

## Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)

|                     |     | Relative Humidity (Percent) |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                     |     | 40                          | 45  | 50  | 55  | 60  | 65  | 70  | 75  | 80  | 85  | 90  | 95  | 100 |
| Air Temperature (F) | 80  | 80                          | 80  | 81  | 81  | 82  | 82  | 83  | 84  | 84  | 85  | 86  | 86  | 87  |
|                     | 84  | 83                          | 84  | 85  | 86  | 88  | 89  | 90  | 92  | 94  | 96  | 98  | 100 | 103 |
|                     | 90  | 91                          | 93  | 95  | 97  | 100 | 103 | 105 | 109 | 113 | 117 | 122 | 127 | 132 |
|                     | 94  | 97                          | 100 | 103 | 106 | 110 | 114 | 119 | 124 | 129 | 135 |     |     |     |
|                     | 100 | 109                         | 114 | 118 | 124 | 129 | 130 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|                     | 104 | 119                         | 124 | 131 | 137 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

As a reminder, you may not request that your child remain indoors. We ask that you trust us to make the right decision regarding appropriate weather, time spent outdoors, use of sunblock, and amounts of water provided. With this in mind, we are always open to input from our students families regarding health & safety measures. If you're not sure if your child's class will participate in outdoor play on any given day, please do not hesitate to ask. We always air on the side of caution, better safe than sorry!

# Water Activities

During the summer months, Little Dreamers may offer optional water days in which children play in the sprinklers outside on the playground. Parents who wish for their children to participate will need to sign a permission form that includes their sunscreen preference.

# Cameras & Photography

Little Dreamers uses the Watch Me Grow parent access camera system.

**Individuals with access to the cameras may not screenshot or screen record while viewing the facility cameras.** This is against the terms and conditions of Watch Me Grow, in addition to being an infringement of the privacy of all of the children in the room. If users screenshot or screen record during their viewing session, users will receive a pop up immediately reminding them that it is against the user agreement of WMG and their account will be suspended.

We will only be approving up to two "users" per family to have access to Watch Me Grow. If users find that they have a grievance with Little Dreamers or with another child as a result of something they saw while viewing the cameras, they must contact the director directly with the complaint.

Any irate behavior towards lower-level management or teachers as a result of having a complaint is directly in violation of our parent handbook. Any irate behavior towards another family due to their child's behavior is prohibited. We ask that users bring the concern to the director directly by way of a phone call, email, or an in-person visit. We will address the concern immediately. Violation will result in the account being suspended. If we have an incident with a user's child(ren) in regards to behavior, we may request that they access the cameras so they may witness the behavior.

If we have an incident with a user's child(ren) in regards to behavior, we may pull the clip from the backlog of footage. If we have a clip of something that we feel is pertinent for a user to see, we will ask that they come to the center to view it. This is to protect the privacy of the other children in the video.

If a user's child is absent, we ask that they do not access the cameras, in order to respect the privacy of the other children in the classroom. If we see that a user's account is actively logged in and watching while their child is not present, we will suspend their account for a period of time determined by the ownership and management.

Watch Me Grow will be inaccessible during nap time. This is approximately from 12:00 pm until 2:00 pm. Users will only have access to the classroom(s) that their child(ren) are enrolled in. Little Dreamers reserves the right to suspend or terminate access to the cameras at any time if we feel it is necessary.

## Items From Home

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring toys and/or electronic items from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. This includes cell phones and video games. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their children.

If the parents fail repeatedly to enforce this policy with their children, the staff will call the parents and require that they come to the school and remove the item.

Children in classrooms with nap/rest time are permitted to include with their bedding supplies, one plush/non-musical toy with which to nap/rest. This toy is to be placed with the bedding supplies and use of it will only be allowed at nap/rest time.

All items brought in for use as part of the curriculum, and/or for nap/rest time will be inspected by Little Dreamers for safety and appropriateness and may be prohibited at the sole discretion of Little Dreamers.

## Firearms & Weapons

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of Firearm, Ammunitions, and/or Weapon on facility property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate termination of services.

## Gang - Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties.

## Sunscreen & Insect Repellent

Little Dreamers Learning Center will apply, with signed consent, insect repellent or sunscreen that the family of the child provides. The child's sunscreen and insect repellent will be labeled with the child's first and last name and be kept secure and out of reach of the children.

## Extra Diaper Fee

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their student has an adequate amount of diapers supplied to the center at all times. If we have sent you a reminder, and your child runs out of diapers, Little Dreamers Learning Center will charge your account \$2.00 per extra diaper used.

## Transitions

We understand that transitioning away from pacifiers and bottles are in each student's best interest. However, Little Dreamers is NOT responsible for this transition. If you decide to 'cold turkey' your child off of pacifiers and/or bottles, we fully support this decision. However, we ask that you start this on the weekend or a break from daycare so that they do not associate the negative feelings with daycare. Furthermore, it can be extremely stressful for your child to all of the sudden not have something at daycare that they are used to having. If you are trying to transition smoothly, we ask again that you start this on a weekend or a break from daycare.

