



Team Handbook

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Welcome to Little Dreamers!

We are a family owned and operated licensed child care facility. We pride ourselves on offering employment with care and understanding. We will treat you like family here.

Little Dreamers is a place where everyone is welcomed and respected individually. Employment 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 employment, please review this handbook thoroughly and familiarize yourself with our operational procedures and policies.

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.



General Information



Administration

Owner & Executive Center Director : Samantha Webb

Email:

Phone:

Owner & Human Resource Director : Jaelin Webb

Email:

Phone:

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

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.

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. Families will still be charged during weather closings.

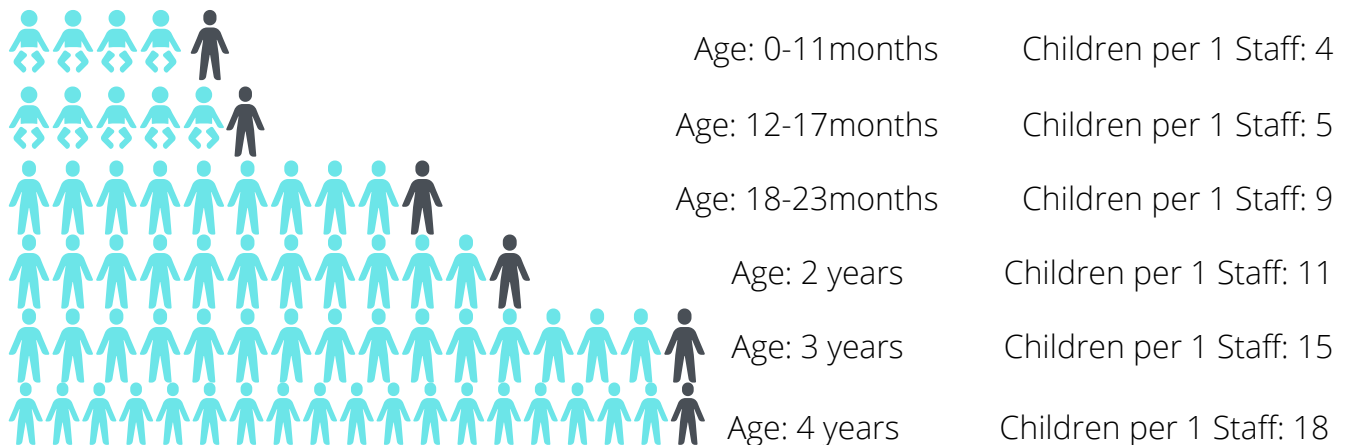
Programs

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

- Raindrops (6 weeks - 18 months)
- Dream Clouds (18 - 24 months)
- Rainbows (2-3 years)
- Shooting Stars (4-5 years)

Ratios

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



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.





Staff Expectations



Equal Employment Opportunity

In order to provide equal employment and advanced opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions are based on merit, qualifications, availability, and ability. Little Dreamers does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, physical disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Terms of Employment

There will be a 90 day probationary period for all new employees and past employees in a new position. During the 90 day probation, you will be observed on classroom management, attendance, and work ethic. If you do not meet Little Dreamers' standards, you will be terminated. Employment and hours are based on the number of children enrolled and the number of children presents on any given day.

If enrollment drops, layoffs may be necessary. Timely notice will be provided in order to minimize any inconvenience the layoff may cause the employee.

Employee & Classroom Evaluations

Evaluations of a staff member's performance will be conducted by the Director and/or Assistant Director every 6 months. The purpose of employee evaluations is to determine an employee's overall fitness for the job, the assigned duties, and the center as a whole. This allows staff members to reflect on their job performance and set new goals for the next six months.

Classroom evaluations will be done at random to ensure all classrooms are licensing approved and well prepared for a tour. Results of evaluations will be discussed with staff if necessary.

Professionalism

Employees should also conduct themselves in a professional manner and always have a friendly and helpful attitude while at work. In addition, employees should engage in good work behavior, which results in a more positive work environment for both student employees and the full-time staff.

The following general guidelines for professionalism should be maintained at all times:

- Arrive on time and stay their entire shift, if needed.
- Is not absent from work on a regular basis and finds a substitute when necessary.
- Follow Little Dreamers Dress Code
- Take directions, suggestions, and criticisms, and follow through to improve performance.
- Respect confidential information regarding children, families, and co-workers.
- Display a positive attitude toward the entire center (the program, children, families, and co-workers).
- Attend staff meetings and other Center events.
- Complete DFPS required training courses annually.

Dress Code

Upon hire, new employees are given a t-shirt with the Little Dreamers logo on it. Employees are encouraged to buy other items of clothing that have the Little Dreamers logo, such as additional t-shirts. Articles of clothing without the Little Dreamers logo are not permitted.

Staff members are expected to observe the 3 C's for appropriate attire at work as follows:

- COMFORTABLE – Staff is expected to play with the children and be down at their level whenever it is appropriate. To do this, staff must be dressed in comfortable clothes that allow free movement and activity.
- CLEAN - All clothing should be clean with no stains, rips or tears, and must smell appropriate. This also applies to personal hygiene.
- COURTEOUS - Staff members interact with children and parents on a daily basis and should dress professionally. Clothing items may not contain alcohol, drug, or cigarette references. Vulgar sayings or suggestions are forbidden.

If an employee is terminated or voluntarily resigns and fails to return the uniforms provided to them it will be docked from their last paycheck

It is expected that all staff members will present themselves and Little Dreamers in a professional, respectable manner. Any staff member not adhering to the dress code may be asked to leave and return dressed appropriately.

Cell Phones

It is important that every staff member's attention remains on the children at all times. A second's lapse in attention could result in a serious accident, which, with appropriate supervision, would have been prevented. Therefore: CELL PHONES ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY OF THE CLASSROOMS OR WHILE IN THE PRESENCE ON THE CHILDREN. Cell phones should remain turned off and stored in the phone pockets in the front desk closet while you are clocked in. Cell phone use is permitted only during an approved off-the-clock break, NEVER in a classroom. It is never appropriate to make a personal phone call, send a text message, check voicemail, etc. while in the presence of children, even while on an approved off-the-clock break.

****Cell phone use in the classroom is unacceptable and will result in IMMEDIATE termination of employment.****

It is expected that when leaving the center for any reason (field trip, van route, etc.), one staff member will carry a cell phone with them. In this circumstance, the cell phone should only be used in the event of an emergency and not for personal calls/text messaging.

In the event of an emergency, the staff member must inform the Director and/or Assistant Director of the situation. In this case, cell phones must be set to vibrate. Calls may be answered only after a substitute has arrived to replace the staff member, and the staff member is outside of the classroom.

Ratios must be maintained at all times.

Tablets & Computers

All tablets and computers owned by Little Dreamers are to be used for work purposes only. Under no circumstances may software be installed without prior permission of the Director and/or Assistant Director.

Tablets must be brought to the front office to charge at the end of every day.

Time Cards & Payroll

Each hourly staff member is responsible for clocking in and out each scheduled workday using a time card and the time clock. Staff members may not clock in before their scheduled shift and are expected to clock out immediately after their shift ends.

Payroll is separated into weekly pay periods. Paychecks will be deposited weekly or available on Fridays.

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit of payroll checks is available to all staff members. Interested staff should complete and return a Direct Deposit Authorization form to enroll. Processing may take one to two weeks; staff members will receive a paper check until the direct deposit is processed.

Personal Belongings

Coats, backpacks, purses, etc. must be safely put on hooks, in closets/cabinets, and out of reach of children. Personal belongings may also be stored in the lockers provided. Little Dreamers is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Food & Meals

Little Dreamers is a peanut-free facility. No food containing, or processed in a facility with peanuts, is allowed in the center. Staff members may store a small amount of food in the break room refrigerator. All food should be clearly labeled with the staff member's name and date. Food should be removed or discarded after one week or when spoiled. Meals should be eaten and prepared only during nap/rest time or during an approved break.

Hand Washing

Hand-washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection and germs. Staff and children must wash hands regularly while at Little Dreamers. Staff hands must be washed with soap and warm water and staff must ensure that children's faces and hands are clean. Hands must be washed even if gloves are worn.

Staff members must wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arriving at the center
- After each diaper change & toileting
- After handling of body fluids
- Immediately before preparing bottles & meals
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After removing gloves
- After using the toilet, assisting a child in using the toilet, or changing diapers.
- After handling soiled items such as garbage, mops, cloths, and clothing.
- After returning to the center from a break
- After coming indoors from the playground
- Whenever hands are visibly soiled.
- After removing disposable gloves.

Hand Washing Instructions

1. Turn the faucet on.
2. Wet hands under warm running water.
3. Dispense liquid or foam soap in the palm. Avoid using bar soap.
4. Rub hands together vigorously to lather the soap on hands for at least 20 seconds.
5. Wash palms, fingers, between fingers, back of the hands, and around the wrist.
6. Rinse hands thoroughly under warm running water for at least 10 seconds.
7. Dry hands completely with a disposable paper towel.
8. Turn off the water using the paper towel to turn the faucet handle.
9. Throw the used paper towel in the trashcan.

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm running water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses like diarrhea, the flu, and conjunctivitis (pink eye).

State Licensing Rules & Regulations

ALL staff is expected to be knowledgeable in regards to Minimum Standards and Texas Rising Star. The following requirements must be met prior to employment at Little Dreamers:

- Employees must be 18 years or older and hold a High School Diploma or equivalent.
- Each staff member must be certified in First Aid/CPR and Infant CPR
- Each staff member must be cleared through the State of Texas with an FBI background check prior to employment and periodically throughout your employment.
- Each staff member must obtain 32 annual clock hours of training.
- Each staff member in our facility must execute and submit a completed Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Affidavit for applicants for employment.
- 8 hours of pre-service training and an additional 24 hours of training within 90 days. This training is mandatory and is the employee's responsibility to pay for his/her training hours and keep all certifications up to date.
- Minimum Standards training and New Employee Orientation



Position Descriptions



Assistant Director

The goal of an Assistant Director at Little Dreamers is to help the Center Director in running the day-to-day operations, making sure to keep within all federal, state, and local standards at all times; and to provide a warm, nurturing, safe, and loving environment where children and families can grow and thrive. The Assistant Director is responsible for providing support for the Director, Teachers, and all other staff so they can provide the best care, safety, and healthy development of children possible. Their duties will include administrative work but they should be up and checking in on teachers and be ready and willing to work in a classroom whenever needed.

Lead Teacher

The goal of a Teacher at Little Dreamers is to provide a warm, nurturing, safe, and loving environment where children and families can grow and thrive. Teachers will plan and implement a full- day, year-round, developmentally appropriate lesson plan using our curriculum, the inclusion of theme- related materials, and the rotation of toys and equipment on a regular basis. Provide a safe, responsive, stimulating environment by actively engaging oneself in daily activities and routines. Form and maintain professional relationships with parents and families. Assess all areas of development of children using the curriculum. Develop and maintain a portfolio for each child. Conduct two parent-teacher conferences per year with each family.

Assistant Teacher

The goal of a Teacher's Assistant at Little Dreamers is to provide a warm, nurturing, safe, and loving environment where children and families can grow and thrive. Assistant teachers will assist in the implementation of weekly themes, lesson plans, and daily activities. Supervise activities of children and provide stimulating activities. Maintain all certifications as required. Ensure compliance with all Texas Minimum Standards.

Floater

The goal of a Floater at Little Dreamers is to provide a warm, nurturing, safe, and loving environment where children and families can grow and thrive. Floaters must actively engage in daily activities and routines with children. Maintain all certifications as required. Ensure compliance with all Texas Minimum Standards.

Cook

The cook is responsible for preparing and serving attractive, nutritionally balanced meals for the children in accordance with the Texas Food Program. This position is responsible for maintaining high standards of quality food production and portion control using standard recipes and also for appropriate quantities of food needed to meet menu requirements. The cook is also responsible for keeping in compliance with the Texas Food Program, as well as assisting with the supervision of the children while they are served and eating. In addition, the cook will spend time with children, teaching them about food and nutrition, encouraging healthy habits, and answering questions from children. The cook will need to have a Food Handlers License, follow Texas Food Program, Licensing, and Health Department guidelines. This position also performs a variety of maintenance tasks such as washing dishes, sweeping, mopping, maintaining refrigerators and freezers, following FIFO protocol when new groceries and supplies are brought in. In the absence of the Kitchen Manager, this position may be responsible for any state, county, or food program observations.



Benefits



Vacation, Personal, & Sick Leave

If an employee chooses to take a paid vacation, a Vacation Notice must be given 2 or more weeks in advance and must be approved by the Center Director. If an employee needs to be off for any other reason, a Time Off Request must be submitted 2 weeks in advance with approval from the Center Director. Employees will receive 5 paid-time-off days a year after their first year of employment. Requests to use PTO days must be put in two weeks in advance or will be denied.

- **Any sick absences will require a doctor's note or it will result in disciplinary action.**
- **If you need to call in you must do so at least 2 hours or more before your shift. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action or termination if necessary.**

Vacation, Personal, & Sick Leave

All regular, nonexempt, full-time employees in good standing will receive holiday pay at their regular rate of pay, provided they meet the following conditions:

- The employee has been with the company for 6 months.
- Work a full shift on the employee's last scheduled work shift prior to the paid holiday.
- Work a full shift on the employee's first scheduled work shift following the holiday.

Employees will not be entitled to holiday pay in the following circumstances:

- The employee is in an out-of-pay status or in layoff status.
- The employee is on an unpaid leave of absence when the holiday occurs.

Holiday pay is not to be considered hours worked in the computation of overtime

Discounted Childcare

As an employee benefit, staff members receive 50% off their child(ren)'s tuition. No registration fee is charged for an employee's child. Staff are encouraged to apply for NCI. If you need help deciding if you qualify, please see your Director.

Chest Feeding Accommodations

Little Dreamers is committed to providing a chest feeding-friendly environment for our enrolled children and staff. Little Dreamers subscribes to the following policy:

- All staff shall be provided a place to chest feed or express their milk.
- Chest feeding parents, including employees, shall be provided a private and sanitary place (other than a bathroom) to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area has an electric outlet, a comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water.
- Staff are also welcome to chest feed in front of others if they wish. A refrigerator will be made available for the storage of expressed human milk. Chest feeding staff may store their expressed breast milk in the center refrigerator. Staff should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date. Sensitivity will be shown to chest feeding staff and their babies.
- The center is committed to providing ongoing support to chest feeding staff, including providing an opportunity to chest feed their baby whenever possible. Infant formula and solid foods will not be provided unless requested by the parent.
- Staff shall be trained in handling human milk. All center staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support chest feeding mothers.
- The center will follow human milk storage guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to avoid waste and prevent food-borne illness.
- Chest feeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks to accommodate chest feeding or milk expression.
- Chest feeding employees shall be provided a flexible schedule for breastfeeding or pumping to provide human milk for their children. The time allowed would not exceed the normal time allowed to other employees for lunch and breaks.



Professional Development



Required Training

Pre Service

30 pre-service training hours must be completed by every caregiver. 8 clock hours of pre-service training must be done before any caregiver can be counted in ratio and the remaining 22 hours must be done within the first 90 days of employment.

Annual Requirements

Regardless of previous experience or training, all staff members are expected to continue their education in the field of Early Childhood Education and Development in order to stay knowledgeable of new research, techniques, practices, and applications.

In addition to Employee Orientation, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), and First Aid training, each employee is responsible for completing 30 training hours on a yearly basis as set forth by Texas Minimum Standards. Each employee must show proof of completed hours. This documentation will be kept in the Staff Member's personnel file.

Food Service Training

Since employees handle food when distributing snacks and meals to children, each employee is required to obtain a Food Handlers License.

The training and qualifying test to be certified is on the internet at the following website: www.360training.com/course/ansi-food-handler-training. After you pass your test, please print out the certificate and turned it in to your Director.

Health and Safety Training

Certification in pediatric First Aid and CPR is required for all direct caregivers and is highly recommended for all other staff members.

Reimbursement for Training

Training opportunities in childcare will be periodically offered free of charge to employees by Little Dreamers. If the employee fails to attend these training sessions, then she/he is responsible for arranging and paying for training on her/his own.

Staff Meetings

Employees are required to attend staff meetings scheduled by the Director. The employees will be paid for their attendance at mandatory meetings, such as monthly staff meetings, parent meetings, parent/teacher conferences, and meetings with Little Dreamers Leadership. The employee will be paid at the overtime rate if a conference or staff meeting requires the employee to work more than 40 hours in one week. There are also occasions when staff members are expected to be involved in outreach events, including but not limited to open houses, vendor events, community outreach, etc.

New Staff Orientation

All new employees are oriented to Little Dreamers policies and procedures. Orientation should begin on the first day of employment and continue throughout his/her first 90 days. 30/60/90 day review will evaluate an employee's performance of all expectations explained during the orientation. Any staff member may ask the Director or Assistant Director for further explanation or clarification of policies at any time. It is the employee's responsibility to uphold center expectations at all times. The orientation program covers all of the following:

- Review of center policies
- Training in emergency procedures, including the operation of fire extinguishers
- First Aid procedures
- Job responsibilities and any other duties assigned
- Training in the recognition of childhood illnesses and infectious disease control, including handwashing procedures and universal precautions for handling bodily fluids.
- Review of child abuse and neglect laws and reporting procedures.
- Confidentiality Policies
- Shaken baby and safe sleep training
- Licensing Ratio Guidelines

To gain a thorough understanding of the operations of Little Dreamers, it is essential that you ask questions. During busy times, make a note of questions you have, and discuss them later with the Center Director or Assistant Director. Please do not relay information to others that you are not certain about. Take the initiative to learn all you can, because those who are successful in this dynamic business never stop learning and/or adding to their knowledge. During the first day of your orientation, you will be asked to complete all necessary paperwork, such as appropriate federal, state, and local tax forms. If you have not previously done so, you will be required to present information establishing your identity and your eligibility to work in the United States in accordance with applicable federal law. You will not be allowed to begin working unless this information has been provided.



Personnel Policies



Confidentiality

Due to the sensitive nature of the information that you will know as a teacher or provider of young children, it is imperative that you keep sensitive information confidential. All Little Dreamers records and information, including medical, financial, and sociological data contained in a child's record or in employee files, are privileged and must remain confidential at all times.

In practice, this means the following:

- Employees should not disclose the personal information (address, living situation, health, or economic status) of any child or family to any other family without permission of the family or court order.
- Employees should not share sensitive information provided by a parent to anyone else without the parent's permission unless there is a risk to the child.
- Employees should not discuss a child or family in a public location, or with any third party in a way that makes their identity obvious.
- Employees should only share information with other employees that is necessary to provide quality care for the children.

Regarding email or social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, or Snapchat

- No personal information about children or families should be sent, shared, or posted.
- No pictures of children or families should be sent, shared, or posted.
- Families should not be asked to join your networks or be "friended".

Remember to watch what you post or remain private...parents can see it

All questions of major concern should be forwarded to the Center Director.

Except in the approved course of performing duties on behalf of Little Dreamers Learning Center unauthorized removal of documents, notes, files, records, or computer files or unauthorized divulgence of the parent's, employee's, or program's confidential information is a violation of Little Dreamers policies and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees who are unsure about the confidential nature of specific information should ask the Director for clarification.

Confidentiality

Employee Personal Information

- All employee records will be kept onsite in a locked and secure file.
- Access to an employee's records is limited to appropriate supervisory employees.
- An employee's records will not be removed from the center.
- An employee's records will never be left out on desks, tables, etc., where other people may have access to them.
- An employee's private information will never be discussed among employees except on a "need to know" basis.
- Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings when discussing this information.
- Special caution must be taken to be sure other children, families, or employees do not overhear information that is confidential.
- Discussion of an employee's information with volunteers, families, friends, or community members is prohibited.
- Information and documents which are considered to be confidential include but are not limited to medical records, educational records, employment records, financial or pay records, and any other private information about the employee.
- All requests for the release of information to persons outside of Little Dreamers shall be directed to the Center Director.
- Information will only be released to persons outside Little Dreamers with the express written consent of the employee.

Search of Little Dreamers Property

Employees do not have a right to privacy in their workspaces or in any other property belonging to Little Dreamers. Little Dreamers reserves the right to search Little Dreamers property at any time, without warning, to ensure compliance with our policies on employee safety, workplace violence, harassment, theft, drug and alcohol use, and possession of prohibited items. Little Dreamers property includes, but is not limited to, desks, computers, file cabinets, storage areas, and workspaces. If you use a lock on any item of Little Dreamers property (a locker or file cabinet, for example), Little Dreamers reserves the right to break the lock in order to search Little Dreamers property at any time.

Child Abuse & Neglect

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 (TFC)[External Link](#). Below, you'll find DFPS' explanations of abuse and neglect based on the definitions found in the TFC.

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 other 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.

Who 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:

- A 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 Hot Line

Grievance Procedure

To foster sound staff relations through communication and reconciliation of work-related problems, Little Dreamers provides employees with an established procedure for expressing employment-related concerns.

In situations where employees feel a complaint is in order, the following steps should be taken:

- If an employee believes that she/he has a legitimate work-related complaint, the employee is encouraged to first attempt to resolve the issue(s) through discussions with her/his immediate supervisor or lead teacher.
- Barring extenuating circumstances, if the situation is not resolved within five working days from the time the complaint is first discussed with the employee's immediate supervisor, it should be brought to the attention of the Owner with written documentation.
- Upon receiving notice of the grievance, The management team will investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint within a reasonable period of time while preserving the confidentiality and privacy of those involved to the extent feasible. The Director will make a decision regarding the problem and set up a meeting to discuss the disposition of the grievance with the employee within five (5) working days after notification. The Director's decision should also be conveyed in writing, to the employee either at the meeting or within two (2) working days following the conclusion of the meeting. A copy of the Director's decision is retained in the employee's personnel file.
- If the grievance is settled at this point, no further action is taken.
- If the employee is not satisfied with the Director's decision, the employee may appeal the decision to the owners of Little Dreamers in writing, at which time the owners will meet and follow the above-referenced procedures. The owners' decision is final.

Co-Worker Communication

Open communication between staff members, parents, and children is crucial to a successful program. Before leaving a classroom for any reason (bathroom, making a copy, calling a parent) an employee should inform his/her cooperating teachers of the reason he/she is leaving and inform anyone substituting for this time of anything going on with the students or class. For all involved, it is important that all issues be addressed and resolved as they arise. All employees are expected to function as a team member at all times

Supplies

Lead Teachers are responsible for reporting to the Director and/or Assistant Director when supplies are running low so they can be replenished before supplies are completely depleted.

Suggestions

Little Dreamers is always looking to better ourselves as a company, and therefore we want constructive staff feedback and suggestions regularly. You can write your suggestions and put them in the mailbox for your Director to see at any time, or you can email your Director or the Owner. As an employee with Little Dreamers, we will receive your suggestions or feedback and keep your confidentiality, whether you submit it anonymously or not.

Personnel Files

Little Dreamers maintains personnel files for each staff member. These files are confidential and staff must arrange a time with the Director and/or Assistant Director to review their file. Staff members are prohibited from accessing the personnel file of another staff member for any reason. Staff members should report to the Director and/or Assistant Director if there is a change in address, phone number, emergency contact, e-mail address, marital status, or number of dependents. These files will only be kept and accessible for 3 months following your last date of employment.

Substance Abuse

Any staff members reporting for work under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances will be asked to leave immediately. If the Director and/or Assistant Director or other staff member has probable cause to believe a staff member's faculties are impaired while on the job, the staff member may be suspended or terminated immediately

Tobacco Use

Cigarettes, vapes, and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on Little Dreamers premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas. Smoking, vaping, and the use of smokeless tobacco products is also prohibited in Little Dreamers vehicles or in personal vehicles being used for the transportation of Little Dreamers children, and while on field trips. Staff members who smoke are strongly suggested against doing so immediately before or during their shift, as smoke can stay on clothing and hair for an extended time. Staff members must wash hands immediately after smoking, before returning to work.

Reimbursement

The Director must first approve all purchases made by a staff member using personal funds. Any unapproved purchases will not be eligible for reimbursement. Original sales receipts should be submitted to the Director and/or Assistant Director within one week of purchase to receive reimbursement.

Non - Discrimination Statement

Little Dreamers does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Little Dreamers is an equal opportunity employer. Little Dreamers prohibits harassment of and by its staff members on the basis of gender, race, age, color, national origin, religion, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, citizenship, disability, and other characteristics. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, making derogatory remarks about any of these characteristics, making jokes or stereotypical comments about ethnic or other groups, and engaging in verbal, physical, and visually offensive behavior. A staff member who feels harassed has the right to file a complaint with the Texas Workforce Commission and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Harassment

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in any way, shape, or form. Little Dreamers is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. As an example, sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, and is strictly prohibited. Complaints about sexual and other types of harassment should be reported immediately to the Director/Assistant Director(s), or the Owner. Sexual harassment complaints will be investigated promptly and all information will be kept confidential. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.



Attendance Policy



Attendance

Your attendance record is important to you as well as to Little Dreamers. It allows us to provide proper staffing and services for all areas of the Center and is an important factor in your performance evaluations.

You are expected to be present at all times when scheduled to work. If sickness or other emergency factors prevent you from attending work or cause you to be late, it is your responsibility to contact the Center as soon as possible to report your absence or tardiness.

Absence Due to Illness

If a staff member is ill and unable to work, the Director and/or Assistant Director should be notified immediately, by phone. Electronic communications such as text messages and email are not acceptable methods of contact when reporting sick. If absent more than one day, the Director and/or Assistant Director will require a note from the staff member's physician indicating the type of illness and when said staff member may return to work.

Voluntary Resignation

Employees should submit a letter of resignation to the Director and/or Assistant Director when resigning from a position. Little Dreamers appreciates at least four weeks' notice if you choose to resign. This will ensure an appropriate replacement can be hired and adequately trained



Disciplinary Procedure



Progressive Discipline Policy

The progressive discipline process is designed to be constructive and corrective and to promote employee success. It gives employees the information necessary to understand what aspect of work performance, attendance, or behavior is unacceptable, identifies the improvements that are expected, and provides the opportunity for employees to demonstrate the expected improvements. The goal is to improve performance, attendance, or behavior.

However, nothing in this policy and procedure requires a center Director to utilize any particular step or series of steps in disciplinary action. The Director may impose any level of discipline, including dismissal whether or not this is the employee's first unacceptable work performance, attendance, or behavior and whether or not a less serious form of discipline has been imposed for any prior performance, attendance, or behavior issues.

It is the responsibility of employees to adhere to the standards of conduct and Little Dreamers policies and procedures.

The following will be done prior to discipline:

- Identify the facts.
- Consider the overall history of performance, attendance, or behavior in the job and length of service.
- Consider the nature, severity, and effects of the unacceptable performance, attendance, or behavior.
- Review and consider previous discipline, if any.
- Determine appropriate action based on available information.
- Any discussion with an employee concerning discipline should be conducted in a place and manner that respect the privacy of the employee.

The Director will document all steps of the corrective discipline process as they occur, as well as all warnings of further corrective action if the performance, attendance, or behavior is not corrected.

The Steps include:

- Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Probation
- Suspension Without Pay
- Termination



Classroom Staff Duties



Opening Procedures

Each classroom has a set of opening, nap time, closing, and weekly cleaning tasks. Staff members are expected to familiarize themselves with the classroom-specific duties. Check with your Director to ensure you know what duties belong to you in the opening procedures.

Make sure your classroom is clean and tour ready; mix new sanitizer solution and fill the necessary bottles; put away sanitized toys; straighten toys and shelves; re-stock supplies such as soap, paper towels, toilet paper, diapers, wipes, etc.; and complete room set-up for the day's lesson plan.

Closing Procedures (teachers)

Wash or spray toys that have been mouthed by children with sanitizing solution and air dry; take the trash to the dumpster, sanitize trash can, and replace trash bag; put toys and equipment away; check outdoor play area for equipment that needs to be put away; sanitize tables, chairs, and shelves; wash dishes; empty sanitizing solution if needed; vacuum carpets.

Closing Procedures (admin)

Be sure to leave the Front Lobby and Front Office tour-ready before you leave for the day; take the trash to the dumpster, sanitize trash can, and replace trash bag; put toys and equipment away; check outdoor play area for equipment that needs to be put away; sanitize tables, chairs, and shelves; check that dishes are washed and all rooms are clean; close all program room doors after the last parent leaves for the day.

Nap Time Duties

Straightening of shelves; sanitizing toys; cleaning tables/chairs/floors; curriculum planning; wash dishes; complete daily activity sheets for children; and prepare for afternoon



Meals & Nutrition



CACFP

Little Dreamers follows the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutrition and practice guidelines for meals and snacks.

- Prior to each meal, tables must be cleaned and sanitized and either air-dried or wiped clean with a dry paper towel.
- All staff and children must wash hands before and after each meal, for at least 20 seconds.
- Staff shall sit with children at the tables and supervise all mealtimes. Staff should encourage conversation by asking questions or talking about the food; good table manners should be modeled.
- First-serving child-sized-portions will be provided for all staff. Each staff member is expected to eat the meal provided, in order to model good eating habits.
- Children will never be forced or bribed to eat. Children must have every food on their plate unless the child is allergic or unable to have it for other reasons given by a parent.
- Following every meal, tables and chairs must be washed with soapy water and sanitized with disinfectant

Every meal MUST be marked at the point of service (when it is placed in front of the child) no matter what. If you are unable to mark a meal for any reason please inform the Assistant Director or Director immediately.

Food from Home

Children are welcome to bring in special treats to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Due to various food allergies and dietary restrictions in our classrooms, we recommend supplying store-bought snacks still in the original packaging.



Infant-2yr Old Programs



SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected, sudden death of a child under age 1 for which a cause of death cannot be identified. It is not known what causes SIDS, however, several sleeping practices have been linked to an increased risk for SIDS. Therefore, Little Dreamers has a strict policy for infant sleep placement.

All infants less than one year will be placed on their back to sleep. Infants shall not be allowed to sleep in a car seat or swing for a period of longer than 15 minutes.

Once a child has been placed in his or her crib for a nap, if the infant rolls from back to front - and is also able to roll from front to back - it is acceptable to leave the infant sleeping on his or her stomach. NO heavy blankets, stuffed toys or pillows should ever be placed in a crib.

A request for alternative sleeping positions must be accompanied by a signed and dated physician's note stating the reason for the request. Staff members found to violate this policy will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure and possibly termination.

Diapering & Toileting Procedure

No child shall be punished, verbally abused, or humiliated for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. If children are being toilet trained, it shall not be coerced. Following are procedures for toileting and diapering must be posted in all toileting and diapering. This plan must be consistently followed.

Toileting Procedures

- All children will be allowed to use the toilet when needed.
- Children will be supervised during toileting but allowed as much privacy as is appropriate.
- No child will be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.
- Children must wash their hands with soap and running water after toileting and before snacks, meals, or meal preparation.
- All educators must wash their own hands after assisting a child with diapering/toileting. Individual paper towels will be used to dry hands.
- Disposable gloves will be used whenever cleaning feces, urine, blood, or vomit.
- Contaminated areas will be cleaned and sanitized using a [NAME OF CHILDCARE] approved disinfectant solution.

Diapering Procedure

- Wash hands and put on disposable gloves.
- Gather necessary supplies. Cover diapering surface with a disposable paper towel.
- Place the child on the covered diapering surface. Clean the child's bottom from front to back with a disposable wipe.
- Fold all contaminated disposable items into the soiled paper and into a plastic bag and discard them into the lined covered trashcan. Diaper and dress child. Wash the child's hands.
- Clean diapering area with a paper towel and disinfectant solution. After each use, the changing table will be cleaned and sanitized using a Little Dreamers approved disinfectant solution.
- Wash hands thoroughly. Return supplies to child safe storage area.



Parent Relationships



Parent Interactions

Many of our employees will become well acquainted with the parents of the children. This is an important part of providing quality care, but there are a few guidelines to which staff members must adhere:

- Address parents by their preferred name (first name or Mr./Mrs).
- Never talk about concerns about a child in front of any other children.
- When stating concern about their child, also state at least two positive things about their child. Don't focus only on the negative.
- Do not use other children's names when discussing behavior concerns and/or incident reports.
- Avoid the phrase "I don't know." Instead, say "I'm not certain of the answer for that; can I get back to you?" then find the answer and reply to the parent as soon as possible.
- Conversations at pick-up and drop-off should be brief; your chief responsibility remains the supervision of the children. If you feel a parent needs more time or attention, ask to schedule a time to meet outside the classroom.

Handling Parent Complaints

- Listen carefully. Many times a person just needs an opportunity to air their feelings and feel they've been heard.
- Repeat what you have heard the other person say, trying to summarize it in one sentence. ("You're upset that Gavin isn't able to stay awake for dinner and seems crabby at night.")
- State the changes that you think the parent would like to have made. ("Would you like us to make sure Gavin lies down for at least an hour every afternoon.")
- State what you will do to solve the problem. ("I will speak with the other teachers and make a note on his chart to make sure the message reaches everyone.")
- Follow through. If you tell a parent you will do something, do it promptly and follow up with them immediately afterward. ("I spoke with the other teachers last week; how are things going with Gavin? Did you notice a change?")
- If you are unsure how to solve the complaint, refer the parent to the Director and/or Assistant Director. ("I'm not sure how to answer that; the Director and/or Assistant Director will be able to better help you.")



Cleaning



Sanitizing & Disinfecting

Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting are important steps to removing dirt and reducing the spread of germs in child care settings. Routine cleaning with detergent soap and water removes dirt and grime from surfaces. Floors, carpets, walls, and windows are cleaned. Sanitizing removes dirt or filth and small amounts of germs. Bedding, bathrooms, kitchen counters, dishes, and eating utensils are clean (to remove dirt) then sanitized. But some child care items and surfaces require the added step of disinfecting after cleaning to kill the germs on a surface. Diaper changing tables, hand washing sinks, tabletops, and some toys should be cleaned then disinfected.

All containers of sanitizing solution should be clearly labeled with the contents of the container and the date. Remember to keep all containers of cleaning and disinfecting products out of the reach of children.