

# Little Minds Training Center

## Parent Handbook

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### Welcome!

I am so excited to have you and your child here with us at **Little Minds Training Center!** I have a strong passion for teaching preschool aged children. There is nothing more rewarding than watching a child explore, discover, and find excitement through learning! LMTC is committed to meeting your child's individual needs while exceeding your expectations.

As a parent myself, I understand the trust you are placing in our school. I am committed to making your child's first educational experience a successful one. Your concerns, questions and involvement are essential to a great preschool program.

Once again, thank you for choosing Little Minds Training Center,  
"A place where kids' brains can grow!"

Please feel free to contact me any time!  
919-214-4718  
littlemindstc@gmail.com  
littlemtc.com

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Riley

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## LMTC Teaching Philosophy

Let teaching be a part of everyday life, because children are everyday learners.

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I will never forget a teaching moment I had years ago. I was cleaning up a project and talking with 4 year old twins, Serena and Isabel. Isabel was counting quietly with her hands when I heard a gasp of excitement. She looked at me with an amazed expression and said with a smile, "Teacher Jennifer, 1...2...3... 4...5...6," while counting with her fingers. It was like opening her brain and watching the sparks fly. At that moment she understood what we had practiced for months. She had counted with her fingers many times before but the concept finally clicked. As you count each number, you add another finger. How marvelous!

That story describes my philosophy. If we teach concepts early then practice, practice, practice; we familiarize the child so that when their brain is ready to comprehend the concept it will be easy to understand - because it has been a part of everyday life.

My philosophy is to expose children to good habits and truths in the beginning and when the time comes for the child to cognitively comprehend the concept, it will be easy and natural to understand.

A part of life!

## LMTC Learning Methods

Start with the basics and build up from there.

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Our preschool is divided into learning areas, well stocked with natural supplies and open-ended projects. I teach preschool-level English, ASL, Spanish, 123's, reading, social and emotional behavioral skills, environment awareness, computer skills, science and world knowledge, music, small and gross motor skills, developing and using imaginations and creativity. I teach these skills through various forms of play and sit-down learning.

LMTC practices pieces of each learning method. I focus on the core that runs through **a variety of learning methods**, focusing on the children and their need for exploration. For example: We use a curriculum web allowing the children to guide the planned activities of learning. We keep their environment natural and open to the use of all 5 senses, **Reggio**. We put our focus on the needs of the child, **Montessori**, by having a well stocked classroom to allow freedom for the child's direction, as well as structure in sit-down learning. In contrast, we have open time for children to use freedom to explore. Keeping lessons and projects open-ended, **Emergent**. We encourage constant group activity while we work together to meet goals, **Cooperative**.

I believe that all methods teach, strengthen and sharpen skills. I also feel that limiting ourselves to *one* form of learning can be crippling. The world offers a variety of lessons, challenges and discoveries and a variety of people who learn in a variety of ways. So why not learn from each predecessor and teach with a variety of methods?

The Reggio Emilia philosophy is based upon the following principles: Children have some control over the direction of their learning; children must be able to learn through touching, moving, listening, seeing, and hearing; children must be allowed to explore; and children must have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

Montessori puts focus on the needs of the child. One distinguishing feature of Montessori is that children direct their own learning, choosing among the sections of a well-structured and stocked classroom including Practical Life (fine and gross motor skill development), Sensorial (sensory and brain development), Language, Math, Geography, Science and Art. The role of a teacher is to introduce children to materials and then remain a "silent presence" in the classroom.

Cooperative Learning is a relationship in a group that requires positive interdependence (a sense of sink or swim together), individual accountability (each of us has to contribute and learn), interpersonal skills (communication, trust, leadership, decision making, and conflict resolution), face-to-face interaction, and processing (reflecting on how well the team is functioning and how to function even better).

The Emergent Program is designed to develop knowledge, intuition, and expand on the interests of the child. Rather than shuffle children through activities quickly, children will have the opportunity to spend an hour in two classes of study per day. The day is then surrounded by free exploration, nature discovery, nourishment, & rejuvenation. Teachers set their classes to challenge each student's abilities in multi-age groups. Teachers are "looped" to stay with their students for the entire preschool experience, nurturing a bond in learning.

## LMTC Learning Areas

Children need space, time, guidance and natural equipment to grow, explore, discover, play, and to simply be a child.

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### **Library Area**

They Do: Morning Meeting, sing, play instruments, plan our day, take turns, work together, read, quiet games and puzzles. It also provides a cozy place when needed.

They Learn: letters, words, reading, art, relationship development, problem-solving, personal space, and how to have quiet time.

#### **Music Box** (Part of our Library)

They Do: learn, celebrate, and express ourselves while playing a variety of instruments.

They Learn: rhythm, beats, sounds, feelings, memorization, words, notes, opposites and working together. Music also teaches literacy and assists in brain development.

### **Writers Workshop**

They Do: turn our scribbling into writing, as they make books, write notes, play letter and number games, practice math problems and learn one-on-one with the teacher.

They Learn: cognitive skills; we put our imaginations to paper, and develop understanding of language concepts.

#### **Computer Lab** (Part of our Writers Workshop)

They Do: practice basic computer skills with various devices.

They Learn: all about letters, numbers, shapes and colors while sharpening hand-eye coordination and giving this technology generation a head start in computer skills.

### **Costume Café**

They Do: dress up and make believe. Dramatic play begins in toddlerhood and develops gradually through preschool years as children broaden their understanding of the world around them.

They Learn: with our imaginations, we dream, explore relationships and boundaries, work through social and emotional challenges and practice current and future life skills and make sense of the outside world.

### **Energy Factory**

They Do: use exercise equipment, tumble, play, bond with friends, and use our voices. We will do this both indoors and outdoors.

They Learn: gross motor skills, body control, respect of others and things, and about how and where to use our energy.

### **Construction Zone**

They Do: build and break with connecting toys, transportation vehicles, puzzles and doll houses.

They Learn: cognitive skills, relationship skills, eye-hand coordination, visual perception, large and small motor skills, self-confidence and explore dramatic play, shape, space, matching, and sequence development .

#### **Workbench** (Part of our Construction Zone)

They Do: we build, break, fix, create, crush, hammer, smash, pound, stick, nail, bolt, glue, tie, and make noise.

They Learn: math, balance, size, shape, measurements, creativity, and that they can do anything.

### **Creation Station**

They Do: expand our imaginations with painting, drawing, gluing, cutting, ripping, and fixing. We use a variety of tools and supplies such as clay, tempera, beads, glitter, pom-poms and natural supplies like feathers, rocks, leaves and sand. Both indoors and outdoors.

They Learn: colors, shapes, size, math skills, measurements, balance, language, self-discovery, expression and a bit of chemistry too.

### **Science Lab**

They Do: hands-on learning about animals, bugs, states, countries, rocks, water, plants, food, germs, hygiene, pet care, and weather. Play in mud, hold a chicken, walk in the rain, jump into leaves, and find worms. Indoors and outdoors.

They Learn: through discovering, cooking, exploring, observing, classifying, communicating, measuring, predicting, experimenting, and like all scientists we learn by succeeding and failing.

**Sensory Table** (Part of our Science Lab)

They Do: get wet, gooey, sticky and messy with sand, water, beans, and shaving cream.

They Learn: about our 5 senses, science, cleaning, playing together, taking turns and dramatic play by adding dishes to water play and animals to the sand.

**Outside**

They Do: plant our own gardens, hold chickens, collect eggs, catch bugs, frogs, and lizards, jump on our inground trampoline and play in our playhouse. They explore and use all 5 senses while using our Sensory Buckets, Science Lab and even Creation Station.

They Learn: about weather, plants, sky, earth, bugs, birds, animals, science, art, caring for the earth; sports, strengthening muscles, exercise and social skills.

**LMTC Curriculums**

LMTC uses a planned weekly curriculum. We plan lessons to correlate with the theme for each activity of the day. You will receive this curriculum for the year.

Example:

Morning Meeting	Rotation Activities	Writer's Workshop	Energy Activity	Creation Station	Energy Activity	Outside
M O N	ABC Trussor Chart	1.	1.	Activity:	Activity:	Activity:
	Comm Helpers	2.	2.			
	Theme Focus Story Song Fishing	3.	3.			
T U E S	ABC Trussor Chart	1.	1.	Activity:	Activity:	Activity:
	Comm Helpers	2.	2.			
	Theme Focus Story Song Fishing	3.	3.			
W E D	ABC Trussor Chart	1.	1.	Activity:	Activity:	Activity:
	Comm Helpers	2.	2.			
	Theme Focus Story Song Fishing	3.	3.			
T H U R	ABC Trussor Chart	1.	1.	Activity:	Activity:	Activity:
	Comm Helpers	2.	2.			
	Theme Focus Story Song Fishing	3.	3.			
F R I	ABC Trussor Chart	1.	1.	Activity:	Activity:	Activity:
	Comm Helpers	2.	2.			
	Theme Focus Story Song Fishing	3.	3.			

Letter       Number       Shape       Color       ASL/Spanish       Holiday

Concepts and Skills \_\_\_\_\_

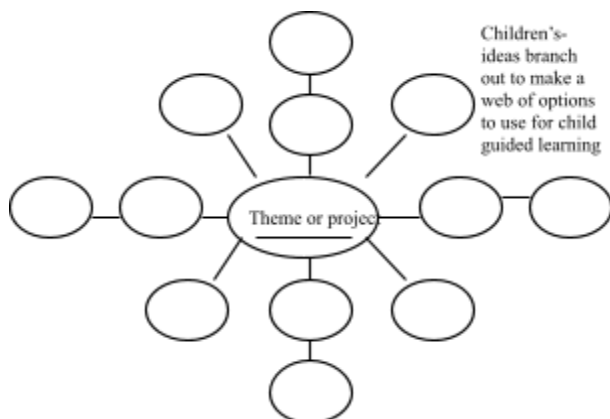
Child Guided Activities \_\_\_\_\_

Planned Theme: \_\_\_\_\_ Week: \_\_\_\_\_

Letter words	Art
Science/ soc	Reading/writing (language)
Math/logic	Games / Energy activity
Snacks/ cooking	Books/ songs/ morning meeting

*Along with an Open Curriculum Web.* If the children want to explore a different area than planned or if they want to explore the planned area for much longer, we will do that. The curriculum plan is the skeleton of learning and the child's redirection is the muscle. One cannot move forward without the other, together we work to create new learning moments.

Example:



## LMTC Daily Schedule

We rotate through the activities in order. The time frame is based on attention span. I let the children guide the direction of the pre-planned activities.

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9:15	Drop Off-Free Play
9:45	Morning Meeting Day planning, Song Fishing, Calendar, Charts
10:00	Rotation Activities Rotate Learning Activities
10:30	Writers Workshop Literacy, Math and Technology Practice
10:40	Energy Activity Inside Energy Factory Games
10:50	Creation Station Arts and Crafts Projects
11:50	Group Activity Science Lab, Cooking, Art, Workbench
11:55	Snack + Lunch = Slunch
12:25	Free Play-Observations
12:35	Outside
12:45	Pick-up

### Field Trips

We have 3 field trips each year (fall, winter and spring). They will be held during regular school hours. All children are invited, regardless of their regular school schedule. Parents and siblings are always welcome to attend.

### Parent Special Guests

We encourage family participation for events like Community Helpers, People Around the World, Family Traditions and Book weeks.

### Family Events

We have 2 Family events during the school year, a Family Lunch in November and Graduation in June. All are welcome.

## LMTC Hours and Calendar

Open Monday-Friday from 9:15-1:15

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We are open September - June. Our first day will always be the day after Labor Day and our last day will be in line with the last day on the traditional school calendar for Wake County.

We are closed:

- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving WEEK
- 2 weeks for Holiday Break
- New Years Day
- Presidents Day
- Spring Break
- Memorial Day

Monthly Payments are the same regardless of LMTC days closed

December and June are ½ months, but all months are rounded out to a weekly fee per year. So all months are the same price. \$95 per week x 40 weeks in school = \$380 per month.

### No Refund Policy

All tuition is based on a flat 4-week monthly rate. Full tuition is due and no refunds will be granted regardless of illness, family vacations or holidays that are closed. We do not increase the price for 5 week months.

### Family Vacations

We do not reimburse tuition payment when you travel as a family. Please follow our calendar as much as possible. If you plan to travel for a month or more, we cannot hold your child's place.

### Holidays

As a multicultural school we will do our best to recognize all American holidays as well as select world holidays for learning and celebration.

### LMTC Enrollment

We accept preschool-aged children from 3 to 5 years old. Children are welcome regardless of race, religion, or abilities.

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Our Enrollment Forms are located on our website. Please fill out the forms digitally.

They include:

- Enrollment Information
- Emergency Information
- Parent Consent Form
- Parent Contract
- All About Me form

### Registration fee

A one-time, non refundable \$150 registration fee is due upon enrollment.

What this pays for:

- Registration and 1st day set up (\$10)
- Beginning of year supplies (\$50)
- 3 field trips (\$50)
- 2 Family events (\$20)
- 1 photo book (\$20)

To secure your child's place, please make your enrollment fee payment at the time of enrollment or by July 1st for the coming year. Without the payment we cannot hold a place for your child.

3 schedule options:

- 2 days a week (T, Th)
- 3 days a week (M,W,F)
- 5 days a week (M-F)

### Tuition

Tuition costs vary depending on which schedule your child is on (M, W or T, Th or M-F). Tuition for the full month is due regardless of your child's illness or vacations. No refunds will be given for these absences.

### 1st of the month

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. There will be a \$25 late fee added if payments are not made on time. If payment is not received after the first week of the month, your child will not be accepted to learn with us until tuition is paid. Please do all within your power to keep your payments current, I never want to ask you to keep your child home!

### LMTC illness closer policy

We are allotted 5 days each school year to close for illness without reimbursement. After we use up those allotted days we will reimburse you for school closers. We will only close for serious illness.

### Potty Training

I prefer all children to be toilet-trained before enrollment. I will work with you and your child if they are already on a toilet training plan only if this does not disrupt the class. For safety purposes, I will only help your child in the bathroom when they cannot help themselves.

## Potty Accidents

Please provide 2 gallon zip lock bags with a spare change of clothing to be kept at school for your child. Potty accidents happen to ALL children, regardless of how long they have been potty trained. In case of an accident, I will help them by giving them a new change of clothes and instructing them to clean up. But I will not join them in the restroom.

## LMTC Staff

I am the only Teacher at our school.

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## Jennifer Riley

I have been working with children my entire Adulthood. I studied Early Childhood Education. Worked as a preschool teacher, worked as a Preschool Manager, opened a new preschool, designed learning environments, created curriculums, and ran my own in-home preschool for a couple of years when my oldest was preschool age. I have also worked with children at my church as a teacher, leader of the children's organization, and have worked with children of all ages. I love it!

## Assistants

For safety purposes we will always have an assistant on site. These assistants will be homeschooled teens and tweens that I know well. Your child will never be left alone with an assistant. They will provide an extra set of hands during a project and be present for an emergency. In case of an emergency, the assistant will care for the group, while I address the emergency.

## LMTC Licensing and Policies

We are only open for 4 hours a day and therefore are not required to be licensed with North Carolina State Childcare Licensing. However I have been well-educated in the licensing requirements and meet the laws and regulations.

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## Safety/CPR

I know that safety is a concern for every parent leaving their child in our care. I assure you that safety is my priority as well. Although I am the only teacher on hand, there will always be an assistant on sight in case of emergencies. Staff is First Aid and CPR trained and certified. We have fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and first aid kits in convenient locations.

## Accident and Incident Reports

All children have accidents! We have first aid kits on hand inside as well as out. We will fill out an accident report for any injury that makes a mark on your child. You will receive a phone call for any emergencies and action will be taken immediately.

## Emergency Drills

In the event of a natural disaster, LMTC has guidelines and policies regarding appropriate action. I have appropriate knowledge and training to handle such emergencies. We will have a safety week just after the start of the school year where the children will make safety drill charts. We will practice safety drills frequently.

## Illness

This is such an important policy and your adherence to this policy is appreciated! The state law requires that ill children be excluded from attending childcare. When our family has a contagious illness, we will have to close the school and follow the same plan that is asked of you. Your child's best interest is our first priority. Thank you for helping us maintain a healthy environment for all the children in our care.

Please be prepared for illness in the first month of school. Take the necessary steps in your home to combat against the bugs that will be passed around. Likewise we will take the necessary steps to keep the school clean and disinfected.

Symptoms to look for: vomiting, diarrhea, colored mucus, fever, unidentified rash, eye discharge/pink eye, lice, scabies. Children with these symptoms will be excluded from the school and considered contagious unless we are otherwise notified in writing by your family physician. A child who is sent home for any of the above mentioned symptoms will need to be free of all symptoms for 24 hours before returning.

## Medications

As your child will only be here for 4 hours a day we hope that all medications will be administered at home.



### Allergies

We do own a dog and we watch friends' dogs on occasion. We also have chickens in a coup. The children will only have contact with these animals on occasion. If your child has a pet allergy, please inform me.

I do have a garden with many flowers and we will have bees around. We are in our garden every day and bee stings are very rare. We will keep dangerous bees away from the property. Your child will benefit from learning about the bees that help us grow food.

### Food Allergies

My goal is to be allergy-free at LMTC, so we are asking that parents please not send food to school unless it is a special occasion. If food is sent to school we ask that all food be allergy-free. Please let me know about all food allergies.

### Food at School

We provide a buffet style lunch. Your child will need to have already eaten breakfast before school. We will not provide a daily snack time. We will have special snacks on occasion for celebrations and lessons. Please let me know about food allergies so that we can accommodate your child.

### Food Handling Safety

I have been properly trained in sanitary and safe food handling. Eating areas and dishes will be kept clean and safe. We expect your children to wash hands before eating and serving snacks.

## LMTC Community

Community in a learning environment is essential! Please take part in the following opportunities to better build a community:

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### All About Me

Each year your students will have All About Me time. Please fill out your child's All About Me form upon enrollment. On this day they will be asked to bring items from home so that we can learn about and celebrate your child!

### Making an easy transition

We honor all children and their personal time-table for readiness. Feel free to pack anything that will ease this transition, a favorite toy, blanket, special music, family picture. Please keep toy weapons home; we encourage tolerance and peace at school.

### Clothing

Please bring your child in "play clothes", a child's work is play! Clothes can mean the difference between success or stress at bathroom time, make sure they are easy to manage. It is a great idea to bring rubber boots as well as an extra change of clothing for emergencies. See "Potty Accidents" for info on extra changes of clothes.

### Class Community

We focus on building class unity throughout the school year.

### Open Door Policy

LMTC has an open door policy. Come on in and visit our school anytime during school hours once your child is enrolled.

### Birthdays

Let's work together ahead of time to make it a special day. As we are only a half-day preschool we will need to make our celebrations short but very sweet!

### Parent Communication

Please visit our website [littlemtc.com](http://littlemtc.com) for updated information each week. We also have a parent magnet board at the top of the stairs where you will find the weekly curriculum, monthly themes, special events and more.

### Parent Messages

Please take advantage of my many forms of digital communication if we don't have a chance to talk in person. You can leave me a message via text, email, or on the bottom of the website [littlemtc.com](http://littlemtc.com). I will respond as quickly as I am able.

### Weekly Blog

The children are a greater priority to me than taking time to write daily notes. I will keep the blog and calendar updated weekly on the website [littlemtc.com](http://littlemtc.com), facebook and instagram.

Thank you for being a part of Little Minds Training Center!