

Little Minds Training Center

Parent Handbook

Welcome!

I am so excited to have you and your child here with us at **Little Minds Training Center!** We are excited to start our 3rd school year at this location. 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 of 4 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 Staff

I am the only Teacher at our school.

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!

Teacher Helpers

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.

Little Minds Training Center

Is an in-home preschool. We use the upstairs of my home with a school room above the garage, a family room with a kitchenette and dining area and a bathroom. We do not venture into my living space and my family does not venture into my school during preschool hours.

We enter and exit the school through my garage so that we do not walk through my living space. This entry opens into our laundry room/hallway with a door that closes off our living space downstairs. We access the upstairs school by the stairs to the left of the doorway.

We walk around the house to the left to access the fenced back yard for playtime. Our dog is kept inside during school hours. We share this backyard with a garden and chickens that the children are free to use for learning and development.

LMTC Referrals from years past

"My daughter absolutely adored Teacher Jennifer! You could tell she gave a lot of thought and planning into her lessons. She always had such fun hands-on learning activities for the children. We couldn't have asked for a better preschool teacher!"

Jami Ward

"There are so many wonderful things to say about Teacher Jennifer. In the years that she was a preschool teacher over my two children, she really impressed me. Jennifer is a positive role model. Her ability to handle any discipline situations: (positive redirecting, no harsh words, no physical contact, no time outs). She taught them how to communicate with each other. Her overall general enthusiasm for life, showed through her daily interactions with the kids. Her ability to create a student-centered classroom environment where active learning took place. She wasn't afraid to get silly with the kids and teach them great songs. She was so thoughtful that even on her wedding day, she still made time to write every kid in her class a poem specific to them. (Yes I still have them.) I could say a million more great things about Jennifer, my kids still to this day say that Teacher Jennifer was their favorite teacher."

Kyra Harmon

"My son's first preschool experience was at Little Minds Training Center with Miss Jenn. Little Minds Training Center provided a comfortable, safe, and clean environment. The learning environment stimulated and motivated my child's social, emotional, mental and physical abilities. Miss Jenn cultivates an environment in which learning is fun, exciting, and possesses positive development by incorporating lifetime skills that prepare my child for elementary school."

Cara Kopp

"I met Jennifer in 2003 when she was a teacher at the preschool my daughter Audra attended. She forms a quick bond with children (and then parents) because she is warm, cheerful and caring. Her classroom style is a mix of the structure of learning with lots of smiles and fun which make children eager to be with her. Outside of the preschool she also helped our family with overnight childcare. Given her relationship with our daughter it was easier to leave knowing Audra was so well cared for in our absence. Jennifer is a wonderful person and teacher."

Tiffany Martin

LMTC Teaching Philosophy

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

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.

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, science, 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.

At LMTC 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 allow 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.

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: community, 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.

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 .

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 Bucket

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 Curriculum

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.

Monthly Theme _____ Weekly Theme _____ Date _____

| | Daily Focus | Morning Meeting | Group Activity | Writers Workshop | Rotation Activities | Energy Activity | Creation Station | Special |
|------------------|---|---|----------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| M o n | Academic Skill word/item of day: | Comm Helpers Fishing for songs or Academic game Mailbox Calendar Story | | | | | | |
| T u e s | | | | | | | | |
| W e d | | | | ▼ | | | | |
| T h u r | | | | | | | | |
| F r i | | | | | | | | |

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.

| | |
|-------|---|
| 9:15 | Drop Off/Outdoor Play Teacher Jennifer welcomes each child from their vehicle 1 at time and takes the child to the backyard. We play with plants, chickens, bugs, sand, water, dinosaurs, a fairy garden, a kitchen, trucks, bug catchers, and so much more! We do indoor play if the backyard is too wet. |
| 10:00 | Free Play Indoor free play gives the child a chance to choose who and what they play with. |
| 10:15 | Morning Meeting Morning meeting is for learning and community. Each child learns their job for the day, most jobs are performed here. We do calendar, the letter/number of the day, sing and have story time. |
| 10:45 | Group Activity Usually based on our weekly theme; we do a variety of activities like science, games, music, discovery, cooking and hands-on fun together. |
| 11:00 | Writers Workshop This is either done as a group or 1 on 1 with Teacher Jennifer. We learn to write letters and numbers using sand, water, pens, pencils, magnets and more. |
| 11:15 | Rotation Activities They choose from a variety of learning activities, rotating every 5-6 minutes. They practice ABC's, 123's, sequencing, find motor skills, and more! |
| 11:55 | Story Time One child chooses a story to read for transition. |
| 12:00 | Lunch Time Kids wash up and have a community lunch. |
| 12:15 | Energy Activity We spend a few minutes getting out our energy playing large motor games together, like duck-duck-goose, animal parade, dance party and more. |
| 12:30 | Creation Station All children make a craft, usually based on our theme. |
| 12:45 | Freeplay As a transition between art and outside play, we have free time when our art is finished. |
| 1:00 | Outside Indoor play if the backyard is too wet. |
| 1:15 | Pick-up Teacher Jennifer brings a child from the backyard to gather belongings and helps buckle the child into the vehicle. |

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 educated in the licensing requirements and meet the laws and regulations.

Teacher/child Ratio

We have a 2/10 ratio. We are scheduled to have 10 children per day and 2 teachers present during all school hours.

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 lasting injury. 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 Hours and Calendar

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

We are open 10 months of the year, 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
- Holiday Break for 2 WEEKS
- New Years Day
- Presidents Day
- Spring Break WEEK
- Memorial Day

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.

Attendance

Please do your best to make sure your child is in attendance on their scheduled days. Illness and emergencies cannot be controlled. But vacations can. When planning other activities, please try to plan them on your child's days off.

LMTC Events

We offer a variety of opportunities for families to join us in our learning and fun.

All About Me

Each October 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!

Spirit Weeks

We have a spirit week at the beginning and the end of each school year to help the children with their transitions. Your child will be asked to dress in a fun way or to bring something into school.

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 welcome parents or grandparents to add your knowledge to a subject we are learning about, this takes about an hour. We open this event 3 times per year. Ex: Community Helpers, People Around the World, Family Traditions, 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.

Birthdays

As we are only a half-day preschool we will need to make our celebrations short but very sweet! Your child will wear our cake hat, receive a gift bag from me with a card from Teachers, we will sing to them at calendar time and lunch time, and they will get to pick the energy activity for the day. Your child is welcome to bring in a treat to share, it can be homemade or store bought. We always have 10 children and I will inform you of food allergies.

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.

LMTC Enrollment

We accept preschool-aged children from 3 1/2 to 5 years old. Children are welcome regardless of race, religion. We welcome all abilities if we are staffed to meet their needs.

Potty Training

Children must 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 or spread germs. For safety purposes, I will only help your child in the bathroom when they cannot help themselves.

Schedule Options

We have 10 spots available per day. But we offer 3 schedule options, which allow for 14 students to be enrolled per year.

2 days a week (T, Th) - 4 spots available

3 days a week (M,W,F) - 4 spots available

5 days a week (M-F) - 6 spots available

Enrollment Forms

These forms are located on the bottom of our website (littlemtc.com). Please fill out the forms digitally.

Enrollment Information

All About Me Form

Registration fee

An annual, non refundable \$150 (\$215 for enrolled siblings) registration fee is due upon enrollment. Without this payment we cannot hold a place for your child. You can make this payment via our payment portal at the bottom of our website.

Registration and supply fee (\$40)

Tee shirt (\$10)

3 field trips (\$50)

2 Family events (\$20)

1 photo book (\$30)

Tuition

- Tuition fees vary depending on which schedule your child is on (M, W or T, Th or M-F). Tuition fees may increase, but only before a new school year.
- All tuition is based on a flat 4-week monthly rate, regardless of closures. December and June are 1/2 months. Your tuition fee is rounded out so that you pay the same monthly fees each of the 10 months.
- I only accept payment through PayPal. Please pay your tuition via the payment portal at the bottom of my website (littlemtc.com). It has an option for recurring payments. It says DONATION, but it is a payment.
- Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. Please do everything in your power to pay by the 1st, I understand that some budgets might need a day or two. If this is the case, please communicate with me ahead of time. If your payment comes in after the 5th I will request a late fee of \$20 via PayPal. If payment is not received by the 10th 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!
- No refunds will be granted regardless of illness, family vacations or holidays that are closed.
- I am allotted 5 days of closure per school year without reimbursement. I will only take these days because of a serious illness or emergency.

Family Vacations

We do not reimburse tuition payment when you travel as a family. Please follow our calendar as much as possible, and plan your travel time around your preschool schedule so that your child can attend as much as possible.

If you plan to travel for a month or more, we cannot hold your child's place.

My illness policy

I am allotted 5 days each school year to close for illness without reimbursement. After I use up those allotted days we will reimburse you for school closers. I will only close if I cannot get out of bed or my illness is very contagious.

LMTC Community

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

Weekly emails

Weekly emails are sent out each Friday with information about the upcoming week/month. We also update our website littlemtc.com monthly.

Text Group

We will have a parent text group for important messages and reminders.

Weekly Blog

I update my blog every Friday with photos and details of what we did that week. These posts are shared on littlemtc.com, facebook and instagram. And I will send a link to our photo share file on Google Drive.

Making An Easy Transition

We honor all children and their personal time-table for readiness.

Drop Off

Please drop off your child in the drop off line. This helps them to quickly assimilate into the routine and distracts them from the emotion of saying goodbye to their parents. Please avoid parking and bringing your child in, this will make their transition more difficult.

Carpool line

Please see the carpool line instructions that will be sent to you. We drop off similar to an elementary drop off. You will pull up in line with your child on the right side of your car. I will help the child out of the car and you will pull out and the next parent will move up. Please stay in your car as much as possible for safety and a quick transition.

Comfort Items

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.

Potty Accidents

Please provide 2 (labeled) 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 change. I will clean up and disinfect any mess.

Backpacks and water bottles

There is **no need** to bring a backpack to school, we understand that some children will want to be like older siblings going to school. We welcome this, we just want you to know that it is not necessary. We also provide water inside and out, so there is no need for a water bottle.

Lunches

Remember that we provide lunches. Please do not send food unless you have signed up for an event and we have explained the allergies.

Spirit Week

The first week of the school year is Spirit week, this will help make the transition more fun. Please see the info to follow our spirit week schedule.

Any questions? Feel free to ask: Text 919-214-4718 or email littlemindstc@gmail.com
Thank you for being a part of Little MindsTraining Center!