Jessica Ruble

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**Handbook** **Policies and Procedures**

**Updated 8/23/24**

**Half -Day Self-Directed Learning**

**& wrap-around care**

Age Groups

3-6 and 6-9

**Monday – Friday**

**7am-5pm**

(Drop-off is 7am-8am) (Pick-up is 11:45am-12pm) (bussing is 12pm-12:10pm)

Although we have set hours of operation, a schedule will be agreed upon by all parties in advance. Once times have been agreed upon, changes can be made, but they need to be communicated in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in being charged with the late drop-off or pick-up fee.

Parents can schedule their child care needs by:

* Texting Jessica
* Emailing Jessica
* Messaging “Little Creek Discovery School” on Facebook Messenger
* Discussing it with Jessica in person

Fee Schedule

**\*Two** weeks tuition payment will be due before beginning the program for the **deposit**. The payment you provide will be used to cover the last two weeks of care. A **minimum** of 2 weeks’ notice is required to end the childcare agreement. This agreement **must** be documented and signed by both parties. Failure to do so may result in tuition charges to cover the minimum requirement.

Rates are as shown below and under contract. Drop off and pick up are defined as when parent/guardian leaves or arrives. **DHS guidelines state parents/guardians must sign their child(ren) in and out**. This can be done by filling out the top portion of their daily reports and initialing.

A late drop-off/pickup rate of $5 per every 15-minute increments (rounded up) may be charged. This can be avoided by providing notification in advance and acquiring approval for change of hours—a phone call to (319)480-6383 (please leave a message) or text should suffice.

\*Tuition is **due weekly on Monday** to cover care for the upcoming week. If payment is not made by close of business on **Monday**, a late payment fee of $5 per day will be charged to your account and your child(ren) will not be accepted into care until your account is paid in full. A late payment fee will only be charged for 5 calendar days before contract is terminated and deposit is retained. Checks will be accepted, but there will be a $30 fee for any returned checks. Please make checks out to “Jessica Ruble.” Only cash payment or PayPal will be accepted after two returned checks**. Weekly tuition payment is required to hold your child’s spot whether or not the child will be attending due to sickness, vacation, appointments, major holidays etc., while the facility is open.**

\***Provider benefits include:**

* **5** **paid** family or personal leave days per calendar year.
* **1 paid** Administrative Day
* **1 paid** Teacher Continuing Education Day
* **Holiday pay** (Nationally recognized major holidays, includes New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.
* When the holiday falls on the weekend the following Monday will be used in observance.)
* The provider is also permitted to **2 weeks’ paid vacation**. These may be taken intermittently by day, week, or all at once. Provider will notify of any planned closings at least 2 weeks in advance.
* While the facility is closed due to provider **vacation, illness, or injury, or due to natural disasters, health or safety concerns,** a reduced tuition of 50% per weekly contract is due per week up to 4 weeks to hold the child’s enrollment spot.

Rates

**Half-Day self-directed learning**

7am-12pm $35/day

**Half-day self-directed learning + wrap-around care**

**$35/day + $5/hour additional care needed** (transportation included)

\*\*2 days per week minimum

Wellness Policy

Little Creek Discovery School is a “Well Child Program.”

Good judgement is of utmost importance in the containment of childhood illnesses.

If your child is ill, please contact us to let us know. We strive to keep our school as germ free as possible.

If your child is not feeling well for whatever reason, please make other arrangements for their care until they are symptom free for 24 hours.

Children will be sent home/not accepted into care if the following symptoms are present or have been present within the previous 24 hours:

* Mucus draining from eye
* vomiting
* continuous cough
* fever of 100 or more
* lice or nits
* diarrhea
* not feeling well enough to play, eat, or do activities with the class
* body aches
* Severe runny nose

In the event of illness, both parties will openly communicate with each other and decide accordingly in order to maintain the greatest level of health for all. In the event that your child is diagnosed with a highly contagious disease, we will need a doctor’s note and/or the child will need to be symptom free for 24 hours before child is accepted back into care. Due to the nature of vaccinations, all children must wait 24 hours after a vaccination before they may return to our facility. Including but not limited to all vaccinations on the CDC schedule and influenza vaccination during flu season.

Medical and Dental Emergency Procedures

Emergency information is kept in your child’s file. In case of illness or injury, this information will be used to notify the parents or the emergency contacts of your child’s status. If your child is injured while at the child care, first aid will be administered. If treatment by a doctor is necessary, we will make every effort to contact you or the doctor you have listed to treat your child. In all cases, an incident/accident report will be completed, and a copy will be given to the parents. Authorization for emergency treatment must be signed at the time of enrollment to ensure that in the event of an emergency, we can make sure your child receives the necessary emergency treatment they need. **It is very important that all emergency contact information is kept up to date and correct. Please inform me immediately of any changes to keep your information current.** Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation if required.

NOTE: in case of a serious accident or sudden illness requiring immediate medical attention, the following procedures will be followed:

1. A phone call to 911 will be made
2. Child’s parents (or emergency contacts are called)
3. Child is separated from the other children and appropriately cared for

Parent, provider, or ambulance takes the child and health records to the doctor or hospital.

What Goes In

We provide a daily report for all students to keep parents apprised of intake, output, naps, and overall behavior. We also provide a daily menu posted by the entry.

Healthy, balanced meals are provided and include breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Water cups will remain available throughout the day so children always have access to safe drinking water. We support learning at all times even when it involves mashing green beans or stacking all of your cantaloupe several times before finally devouring the tower. Basic manners (ex: children must sit at the table to eat and keep food on their plate instead of on the table) are enforced. We will do our best to accommodate special diets, but it may be necessary for parents to supply substitutions.

Must Come Out

We know that every child is different – and that learning how and when to use the potty is part of typical child development. There is no “magic” age that a child is suddenly ready for the potty. Communication between parents and caregivers is key! We will work with the child and parents will be given a checklist to decide when it is time to start the process.

Children that are currently potty learning will be dressed in easy to remove bottoms (no suspenders, coveralls, buttons, or zippers). Please provide only pull-ups or training underwear that the child **can remove themselves** to allow independence during this sensitive learning experience. One accident per day will be allowed before being placed back in a pull-up (**no diapers allowed**!)

Children will be reminded and given opportunity several times a day and congratulated (never ridiculed) for their efforts – regardless of the result! Practice makes perfect…they will eventually get it!

Outdoor Play

We believe there is no such thing as BAD weather. We will try to play outside everyday so please dress your little ones appropriately. We feel that it is worth spending 15 minutes bundling everyone up for 15 minutes of outdoor play. Children will be allowed to play outside as much or as little as they request to, but we will completely omit outdoor play during extreme/adverse weather. (i.e., chill advisories, thunderstorms etc.)

We have found great value with the Muddy Buddy Suits found on Amazon.com for messy play and keeping the children warm and dry throughout the wet seasons.

**\***We highly encourage parents to provide these as well as rain boots/crocs/closed toe water shoes to be kept at the facility.

**\*\***Sandals, flip flops, jelly shoes, heeled shoes/boots etc. are not considered appropriate footwear for school.

Please provide **at least 2 sets** of clean, weather appropriate changes of clothes **daily** in case of extreme messiness. We do tend to be VERY messy so please only send clothes that are okay to be messy in. We do provide aprons for mealtimes and messy play, but kids will still be kids so please keep your favorite outfits for home. As clothes become soiled, they will be placed in disposable plastic bags and hung on their cubbies if the child does not have a size appropriate backpack. \*Please, **no** oversized bags.

\*We do not have any stash of spare clothes, so please plan accordingly.

School Rules

When I began researching teaching methods, many of the books and articles I read focused on a child’s need for play-based, child-led learning, self-discovery and autonomy, and the importance of an environment to learn respect. Too many adult generated rules, restrictions and schedules get in the way of that. That is why we narrowed our list of rules down to just two—it’s okay if it’s **safe**, and **not disrespecting** people, living things, our materials, or property.

Children are allowed to run, jump, climb, walk barefoot, and explore boundaries with one another as long as no one is hurt (physically, mentally, emotionally etc.) or feels disrespected and property is undamaged. When the rule is broken, we set limits. Children are encouraged to set limits and work issues out with each other. “Please stop screaming! It hurts my ears!” Our jobs as early childhood professionals are to enforce the limits that are set, provide conflict mediation as needed, validate emotions through emotion coaching, and help provide options if negative words come up like no, don’t, and can’t. “Tommy said it hurts his ears when you scream inside. I bet that it would be okay if you screamed outside. Do you want to try screaming outside?”

Our focus is exploration and discovery because THAT is when children learn the most.

Curriculum

Children are natural learners. They are intrinsically motivated in everything they do.

We meet them where they are and provide them with the environment, materials, and the time they need to explore, experiment, and practice their skills and build upon their knowledge until mastery.

We have an excellent unit curriculum based around seasons and holidays. However, children are also given the freedom to explore what interests them. We plant the seeds and they choose what direction and how deep they will grow.

We encourage parents to be their child’s biggest supporter. If you have noticed they are really into a certain subject at home and it has not come up at school, please let us know. We are always open to suggestions on something that our school may be missing.

Other Fun Facts

We are a gender-neutral school. Children are allowed to express themselves freely without restrictions to gender and we do not associate colors/objects/toys/behaviors/emotions etc. with a specific gender.

Toys from home are NEVER allowed. Anything brought from home will be immediately placed in their cubbies and will remain there until pickup.

**\*Please do your best to refrain from bringing toys and food**. We have many purposeful materials for the children to explore and discover and distractions take away from their development.

We are NOT cry-it-out providers. We will do everything possible to comfort your child while being fair to the other children in our care.

Family Pets

Our furry family includes our resident nanny dog, a Goldendoodle Standard named Lexie Mae, and our spunky, excitable Goldendoodle mini named Genevieve. We do our best to keep the dog’s excrements picked up in our backyard in order to minimize “brown crayon” art and other dog poop landmine incidents. The pets are allowed in the living areas of the house and the dogs will be allowed around the children during outdoor play. When they need space, they will retreat to the lower level where their food, water, and beds are stored. They are very well socialized and love people.

During pick-up and drop-off times, they will be put away to avoid escape and unnecessary chaos. They both behave very well if captured by a child. Please let us know if anyone in your family has pet allergies so we can take extra measures to keep everyone comfortable.

We also keep backyard chickens. Their coop is located on the east side of the property away from the play areas. They will, on occasion, be able to free range and find protein sources in the yard. They are also carefully chosen by their breed to be docile and gentle around little people.

Communication

Communication is very important to us. When we accept a new family into our program, we like to be sure we can share openly any concerns or questions that may arise. It is important that we share a similar child development philosophy. We welcome questions, feedback or discussions of any kind that are aimed as a positive outcome for the children.

Means of communication will include, but not limited to, talking at pick-ups and drop-offs, providing daily logs and quarterly progress reports, posting notices on our private Facebook page, calling, emailing, texting, messaging with concerns. Parents and caregivers should establish a friendly relationship and discuss the needs and achievements of the child daily. We may also choose to set up an annual or semi-annual conference to discuss your child’s achievements, development, behavior, or health. Parents may also request a conference if there is a concern that will require more than a 5-minute conversation. We appreciate the communication of your concerns be brought to our attention as soon as possible.

In all communications, respect, courtesy, flexibility, and cooperation etc. are expected. We are looking forward to a terrific relationship with you, your child and family.

Termination of Care

**Parent termination of services**: Two weeks’ notice is required to terminate this contract. If parent(s) are unable to give a two-week notice, payment equivalent to a two-week notice will be due before the child’s last day. Your initial deposit payment will cover tuition for your last two weeks, given there are not any outstanding balances left to be paid.

**Provider termination of services**: The provider reserves the right to terminate the contract at will and without notice. Reasons the provider may terminate the contract include but are not limited to:

* Parent/provider differences or threatening behavior from the parent(s), guardian, or family member.
* If the child demonstrates that they are unable to adjust to our program setting.
* If we feel we are unable or unqualified to meet the needs of the child without additional staff.
* Parent’s change in schedule, failure to pay, or frequent late payments.
* Violation of handbook, or failure to complete required forms in a timely manner.

**\*Parents and guardians are required to thoroughly read the entire child care contract and ask for a detailed explanation of any rules and regulations they do not clearly understand prior to enrollment.** Thank you for your attention to these matters. It is our intent to be as open as possible about expectations in order to foster a positive relationship. Two weeks’ notice will be given to you as a courtesy if possible.

**~We may add to/modify this handbook as necessary and will let you know in writing when any changes**

**occur. ~**

Resources

Parenting and guiding little ones can be …**is** challenging. Here are a few of my own personal resources that I have found helpful and recommend for those that are looking for a better way. No Bad Kids: Toddler Discipline without Shame by Janet Lansbury

Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How to Stop Yelling and Start Connecting by Dr. Laura Markham

Let Them Play by Jeff A. Johnson and Denita Dinger

It’s OK Not to Share…and Other Renegade Rules for Raising Competent and Compassionate Kids by Heather Shumaker

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv