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## **Statement of Purpose**

The goal of The Learning Center of Hopkinton is to provide a safe, happy and nurturing environment in which children have the opportunity to grow and develop at their own pace. The Learning Center supports the family by offering quality care to children from 3 months of age until they reach 12 years or their 7<sup>th</sup> year of schooling (6<sup>th</sup> grade) whichever comes first, in their parent's absence.

## **Educational Philosophy**

The Learning Center of Hopkinton believes in placing equal emphasis on the developmental needs of each child, including the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual components, which contribute to each child's maximum growth potential. Children are encouraged to express their ideas and thoughts through artistic representation, dramatic play, experimentation, and investigation. Teachers design the programs to meet each child's interests and needs. Classrooms are designed to provide a safe, happy, and stimulating environment in which each child can grow and develop. Parent input and support are an integral part of the learning experience. Parents are encouraged to discuss their ideas with their child's teacher.

## **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

The Learning Center of Hopkinton does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, marital status or sexual preference. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

## **Hours of Operation**

The Learning Center of Hopkinton is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

TLC is licensed by The Department of Early Education and Care. They can be contacted at 508-798-5180 or at [www.mass.gov/eec](http://www.mass.gov/eec) for information regarding our center & receive the program's compliance history.

# Organizational Chart

Executive Directors and Owners - Jen Blodgett and Melissa LaPointe

Director- Lauren MacIntosh

Assistant Director- Valerie Fitzgerald

## Holidays

The Learning Center of Hopkinton is closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve 5:00 pm closing
- New Year's Day
- President's Day
- Patriots Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Indigenous Peoples Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday following Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve - 12:00 pm closing
- Christmas Day

If one of the above days falls on a Saturday, the holiday will be observed on Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the holiday will be observed on the following Monday. Substitutions in schedules cannot be made for holidays.

The center may also close the day before or after New Year's Day, Independence Day and Christmas and if less than 10 families are planning to attend.

# Enrollment Procedures

TLC encourages parents to meet with the program administrators prior to admitting your child/ren to our program. Parents are provided an orientation of the program and are given the opportunity to meet our educators before your child is enrolled.

Educators will support transitions and coordinate with services offered by other providers. We request that parents share information about other therapeutic, educational, social, and support services received by the child. The child's developmental history will be shared and updated periodically by their parents.

# Meals/Snacks

Each morning and afternoon, children are served a healthy snack such as fruit, vegetables, crackers, and water. Children should bring their own nutritious lunches. Children with allergies and special diets should only have food from home.

Toddler parents who prefer whole milk should provide it themselves. Parents of infants should provide ready-to-use formula or breast milk.

Lunch must be provided by the parents. Lunches should be stored in a lunch box

# Special Enrichment Activities

- Learning through Music with Gerry
- Tumble Bus (extra-curricular not included in tuition)
- Yoga

# **Tuition Policies**

## **Registration Fee/Annual Re-Registration Fee**

At registration, a non-refundable fee of \$100.00 for the first child is required. Each additional child is \$50.00 per child. An annual re-registration fee of \$50.00 per child is due each year in March upon registering for the upcoming September.

## **First Month Deposit**

A non-refundable, non-transferable deposit in the amount of \$850.00 must accompany each new registration. The deposit will be applied to your child's last full month of care. One full month's notice must be submitted in writing in order to use your deposit. This deposit can only be reimbursed when care can be provided. Additional time needed for care will be assessed as needed.

## **Sibling Discount**

Families with two children enrolled five days a week receive 10% off the tuition of the older sibling. When three children are enrolled five days a week, families receive 10% off the tuition of the two oldest siblings. When both children attend less than 5 days, 5% is applied to the oldest sibling.

## **Tuition Tax Credits**

Tuition payments to TLC qualify for a federal tax credit. TLC's director will provide you with the center's Federal ID No. Please request tuition statements as needed. Email is the best method of request.

## **Methods of Payment**

Cash, checks, or money orders made payable to The Learning Center of Hopkinton are accepted.

## **Insufficient Funds**

If a check is returned for insufficient funds, you will be notified by The Learning Center and charged a penalty of \$35. You must pay the tuition plus the \$35 penalty within 24 hours of this

notification. If a second check is returned for insufficient funds, only money orders or cash will be accepted.

## **Late Payments**

Tuition is due in advance of services. If a tuition payment is not received within two days after the due date, a \$25 late payment fee will be charged.

Monthly tuition is due by the 29<sup>th</sup> of each month for the following month's care.

## **Late Pick-Up Fee**

If a child is left at TLC past our normal closing time a penalty of \$17 per 15 minutes (or any part thereof) per child, will be charged.

## **Inclement Weather and Emergency Closings**

In the event of building emergencies, heavy snowfalls, hurricanes, tornadoes, or other severe weather conditions, TLC will open or remain open for as long as safety permits. In these situations, parents are called and expected to arrange for the child pick up by the specified time.

If weather conditions are severe in the early morning hours, please call the center after 6:00 am for recorded information.

Full tuition is due for weeks in which emergency conditions require the center to close.

## **Illness, Vacations, and Other Absences**

Due to staff scheduling requirements, TLC does not offer a credit or refund when a child is absent.

All full time children, receive a free, one week's vacation that is included in their monthly rate.

## **Enrollment Withdrawal**

One full month's notice must be submitted in writing in order to use your deposit. Your \$850.00 deposit will be applied at this time. This deposit can only be reimbursed when care can be provided. Additional time needed for care will be assessed as needed.

## **Schedule Changes**

Due to staff scheduling requirements, the center does not provide drop-in childcare services. A regular schedule is established for each child upon enrollment. Different hours cannot be substituted for those previously scheduled. However, the center tries to accommodate parents who need an additional day of childcare from time to time. In these situations, parents must

make prior arrangements with the director or assistant director. Additional hours are billed at the applicable hourly rate, noted on our tuition rate sheet.

## **Policies and Tuition Changes**

The Learning Center reserves the right to change its policies and tuition rates with 30 days written notice.

## **Arrivals and Departures**

Parents should accompany children directly to their classroom and assist in hanging coats, etc. Parents are responsible for informing teachers of their child's arrival as well as signing in on the required sign-in sheet. If a child is going to be absent, parents should call the center by 9:00 a.m. to notify the teacher.

At the end of the day, parents are responsible for notifying the teacher of their child's departure as well as signing out on the required sign-out sheet. No child will be picked up by anyone other than a parent or person identified on the required authorization and consent form. Teachers must ask for identification from the authorized pick-up person not known by the childcare staff. These guidelines protect the children's safety.

## **Full Day Program**

The center opens at 7:30 am.

Classroom programs begin at 9:00 a.m. Since teachers have planned schedules and activities, parents who cannot arrive by 9:00a.m., should schedule an arrival time with the teacher so their time with the children is not disrupted.

TLC closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Please allow time to greet, gather belongings and sign out before 6:00 p.m. to avoid a late pick-up fee. Parents who are delayed unexpectedly should notify the center by 6:00 p.m.

## **Center - Family Relations**

It is our belief that parent/teacher communication is the key to a successful relationship between TLC and its families. We realize and appreciate that parents need to know as much about what happens here as they do when their children are at home. We record and communicate details about daily activities, developmental progress, sleeping and eating patterns, diaper changes, and toilet training. We plan for individual differences, special abilities, and cultural diversity. We welcome family involvement and appreciate parental input.



TLC welcomes parents' visits to the center and the child's classroom at any time. Parent participation is encouraged during classroom time, field trips, and special events. TLC provides an open-door policy where parents are welcome at any time.

## **Parent Information**

Parents are expected to read TLC's monthly newsletter (located on our website and linked on Facebook) which notifies them of ongoing events, activities, and other important information and includes each classroom's curriculum for the upcoming month. Other pertinent information is posted on the parent bulletin board in the reception area.

Each day, teachers speak with parents to provide a brief update of the child's behavior and progress. In addition, written progress reports are provided to parents every six months. Teachers are also available for parent/teacher conferences at the parents' request.

Parents may contact EEC for any information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history.

Parents are provided with a brochure on our curriculum, activity schedule, and individual classroom schedule/routine.

## **Behavior Management**

Behavior management is based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of each child. Teachers help children develop self-control through understanding by setting reasonable expectations, offering choices, and encouraging children to verbalize their feelings. When necessary, teachers help children assess problems and devise solutions, which may include redirecting the children to another activity. Persistent problems are brought to the parents' attention and a conference will be scheduled if necessary.

### **The following practices are strictly prohibited:**

- Spanking or other corporal punishment of children
- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical contact inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks.
- Depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks, force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence.
- Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet, forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.

- confining a child to swing, highchair, crib, playpen, or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision.
- excessive time-outs. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.

## Illness

Children must stay home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- A fever over 101.0 during the previous 24-hour period
- Diarrhea or vomiting during the previous 24-hour period.
- A bad cold with heavy nasal discharge
- Possible symptoms of a communicable disease (chicken pox, lice, scabies, strep throat, impetigo, meningitis, or mononucleosis)

If your child will not be attending school, please telephone the center by 9:30 a.m. If your child has a communicable disease, please notify the center as soon as possible so that others can be notified.

If the staff feels that a child is ill, or becoming ill, parents will be notified and expected to make arrangements for the child to be picked up. The ill child will be made as comfortable as possible and taken care of on a one-to-one basis until a parent has arrived.

## Administration of Medication

The Learning Center staff shall not administer prescription or non-prescription medication to a child without written authorization from the child's parent and physician, indicating the date, child's name, and dosage. (The label on prescription medication may serve as the physician's written authorization.) Standard authorization forms for over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol and Motrin are available for your pediatrician to sign. Medications will be stored in a safe manner as directed on the label. TLC shall not administer the first dose of a prescribed medication.

Do not leave medication in your child's cubby, pockets, lunch box, or backpack. Please give the medication directly to your child's teacher.

All children with a chronic medical condition (example: allergies that require epi-pens, asthma in which inhalers/nebulizer need to be used) which has been diagnosed by a licensed health care provider, must provide TLC with an Individualized Health Care Plan. Forms can be obtained by office administrators or your child's educator.

Parents are asked to please provide all medications prescribed by your child's physician. (Epi-pens, inhalers, nebulizers, etc. that are prescribed daily)

TLC's Health Care Policy is posted in every classroom for the parents review. You can also obtain a copy from your child's educator or from administration.

## Transitions

Children who are chronologically ready to transition into the next specified age group are given the opportunity to spend short periods of time in their new classroom on a frequent basis. When the child becomes familiar with and confident in his/her new classroom environment, the educator's assessment and parental input will aid in the permanent transition.

## Progress Reports

A written report will be provided every six months on the progress of each child in the program. Parents will be offered a teacher/parent conference to discuss the content of the report. A copy will be provided to the parent and a signed copy will be kept in the child's record.

### Frequency of reports is as follows:

- Infants and Children with Special Needs - Every 3 months
- Toddlers and Preschoolers - Every 6 months
- School Age - Annually at the midpoint of the program's year

## Emergency Care

The TLC staff are trained in first aid and CPR. In case of accidental injury where medical assistance is immediately required, the following procedures are followed:

- 1) Rescue/paramedics will be called if the child needs to be transported to the hospital. The director will accompany the child and bring the child's medical information.
- 2) Parents will be notified immediately of the child's injury and of the emergency procedures that have been followed.
- 3) If the parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact person assigned by the parents will be called.

The center will maintain a parental consent form agreeing to this policy.

# Suspension

Parents will be provided an opportunity to meet with the child's educators to discuss options other than suspension. They will be provided with referrals for services and will help develop a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program.

If the first measure is not met by the parent and the child, our protocol is as follows:

- Assaulting other children
- Assaulting staff members
- Repeated non-compliance with program rules as evidenced by incident reports or other documentation.
- Chronic, disruptive behavior as evidenced by incident reports or other documentation.
- Seriously jeopardizing the safety of themselves or another child as determined by the directors or substitute authority.

Children in infant, toddler, and preschool programs are generally ineligible for suspension; however, exceptions may be made under extreme circumstances.

# Termination

A family may be terminated from TLC for violation of center policies outlined in this handbook. It is TLC's policy to give families at least 2 weeks' notice of termination and to support families in finding alternative childcare.

If a family is at risk of termination, the director shall issue a written notice to the family. The notice shall review the reasons for termination, referrals for alternate childcare, and other referrals deemed appropriate by the director.

Where appropriate, the director shall inform the family what action, if any, may preclude termination from TLC. The director has final authority to terminate a family for violation of the center's policies. Children will be prepared for termination consistent with their ability to understand. In extreme or extenuating circumstances, TLC reserves the right to cancel a child's enrollment immediately and without notice.

# SIDS Reduction

Infants will be placed on their backs for sleeping unless the child's health care professional orders otherwise in writing. Infants will nap in their individual safety approved crib. Slats will be no wider than 2-3/8 inches apart. Cribs will not contain pillows, comforters, stuffed animals or other padded materials.

# Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Policy

Staff and volunteers at TLC are mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect will report their suspicions to the director/administrator, who will notify the department of social services on behalf of the center. In the event a parent makes claims of child abuse or neglect against a staff person or volunteer, that person shall be removed from the classroom and an immediate investigation shall be made. A decision as to whether the staff person shall remain or be terminated will be determined from the results of the investigation.

- All staff are mandated reporters and must report suspected child abuse or neglect. The report shall be made by the Director/Asst. Director. The Director will then make the report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) pursuant to M.G.L.c. 199, s. 51A.
- The Director will then notify EEC immediately after filing the 51A, or after learning that a 51A has been filed, alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the program or during a program related activity.
- The Learning Center shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse or neglect.
- EEC regulations prohibits staff accused of child abuse/neglect from working directly with children until after DCF investigation is completed and for such further time as EEC requires.
- Staff will not discuss suspicions with parents. All allegations will be kept strictly confidential for the Director to handle.
- Documentation will be kept of all suspicions including child name, date, time, suspicions of staff, comments from child, bruises, etc.
- Staff can report any suspicions on their own even if the director does not think the situation warrants it.
- Staff will cooperate with all investigators.
- If DCF supports any allegations, TLC will work with and provide any information to comply with the allegation.
- If DCF supports the allegations the employee will be terminated immediately. No exceptions will be made.

## Referral Services Plan

All Educators are responsible for noticing and reporting any inappropriate behaviors or suspect emotional, social, cognitive or physical delays observed in a specific child. The classroom Educator will notify and discuss with the Directors or Assistant Director and will be logged in the child's file. The Educators will be responsible for observing and logging these behaviors for a set amount of time where an appropriate plan can be devised. The Directors or Assistant Director is responsible for the complete process of any referral plan and teacher's actions. These components may be used in developing such a plan:

- Educators write observation reports and records and reported to the Directors.
- A child with concerned behaviors will have a logbook that all observations will be written in
- The Directors are involved in further observations and reporting after viewing the logbook and meeting with the Educator.
- There is a review of the child's past behaviors and discussed in a team meeting.
- A meeting with the family along with the reporting Educator and Director will be set.
- The parents are informed of the concern and directed to their pediatrician or other resources suggested by the Directors, which may include services such as dental checkup, vision or hearing screening, social, mental health, educational and medical services for their child.
- Parents provide a written note describing any special education the child will receive outside or inside the center. This will be maintained in the child's file.
- Staff will coordinate with Education specialists and parents to work with the child's needs in the center.

## Transfer of Records

Upon written request of the child's parent, the center shall transfer the child's record to the parent or any other person the parent identifies, when the child is no longer enrolled at The Learning Center.

## Clothing

Each day, children participate in several indoor or outdoor activities. For your child's comfort and safety, we request that you adhere to the following clothing guidelines:

- Please label all your child's clothing and belongings.
- Children need to have an extra set of clean clothes (underwear, socks, shirt, pants, and sweater) at the center at all times. Clothes can be stored in a bag in your child's cubby/backpack. If extra clothes are soiled please replace them with a clean set.
- **Indoor wear** - Children should be dressed in clothing that is comfortable and washable so that spills and soils do not matter. Families should dress children in shoes or sneakers that have some traction. The baby room has a "no shoes" policy.
- **Outdoor wear** – All classes plan to go outside daily (weather permitting). Please dress your child for outdoor play. Jackets, boots, hats, mittens, and snow pants should be provided daily in the winter, while heavy sweaters, hats, and jackets should be provided in autumn and spring. Summer wear includes a bathing suit, towel, sunscreen, hat, and water shoes.

# Diapering and Toileting

## Diapering

Infant and toddler teachers record all diapering times in the *Infant's Daily Routine Chart* and all bowel movements in the *Toddler's Daily Report*.

The following procedure is followed when changing diapers:

- 1) Wash hands thoroughly using liquid soap and warm water.
- 2) Apply latex gloves.
- 3) Make sure the changing area is clean and the paper liner has been changed.
- 4) Place the child on the changing pad and paper liner.
- 5) Educators keep at least one hand on the child at all times when the child is being changed on an elevated surface.
- 6) Remove the diaper and place it in the diaper pail.
- 7) Wash the child, using disposable wipes or other disposable products at the changing area. Dispose of used wipes in diaper pail.
- 8) Place a fresh diaper underneath the child.
- 9) Apply powder or cream as directed by the parent.
- 10) Fasten diaper.
- 11) Remove gloves.
- 12) Remove the child from the changing pad.
- 13) Wash your hands and the child's hands.
- 14) Return the child to the play area.
- 15) Place soiled or wet clothing in a closed plastic bag to be taken home.
- 16) Dispose of used paper liner in diaper pail.
- 17) Clean the changing area with a bleach solution.
- 18) Replace paper liner on the changing pad.
- 19) If the diaper pail is full, empty it in the dumpster.
- 20) Wash hands with liquid soap and warm water.

## Toileting

Staff members train children in accordance with the requests of their parents and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities. The following guidelines are also used:

- There is no verbal reprimand for soiling or wetting clothes. School age children change independently and privately in the bathroom. Preschool children are encouraged and supported with verbal assistance at the door as they change themselves in the bathroom.
- Children may go to the bathroom whenever they need to and are not rushed or disallowed.
- School age children toilet independently. Preschool children are encouraged to wipe themselves, but will be assisted as necessary. Toddlers who are training will be assisted as necessary.
- After toileting, all children must wash their hands with liquid soap and warm water.
- Soiled or wet clothing must be placed in a closed plastic bag for parents to take home.
- All staff must wash their hands with liquid soap and warm water after handling wet or soiled clothes or assisting a child in the bathroom.

### **TOILET TRAINING PROCEDURE:**

Once a child is developmentally ready and parents provide interest in toilet training, the parent provides extra clothes, pull-ups, etc. and provides educator of a plan they use at home

The child is then asked throughout the day if he/she needs to use the bathroom

If the child has an accident and is using a pull-up, the pull-up is changed at that time. If the pull-up is dry the pull-up can be left on however it will be changed every 3 hours. If the child is in underpants and they are soiled, the child will be assisted with changing their underpants and the soiled clothing or underpants will be placed in a sealed plastic bag for the parents to bring home.

## Child Guidance

Educators will provide positive and consistent guidance in a manner based on the understanding of the individual's needs and development of the child. It will include:



- Encouraging self-control, recognizing and reinforcing children's appropriate behaviors, having reasonable and positive expectations, setting clear and consistent limits and redirecting
- Helping children learn social, communication, and emotional regulation skills they can use in place of challenging behaviors
- Using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to encourage appropriate behavior and prevent challenging behaviors
- Intervening quickly when children are physically aggressive with one another and helping them develop more positive strategies for resolving conflict
- Explaining rules and procedures and the reasons for them to children, and where appropriate and feasible, allowing children to participate in the establishment of program rules, policies, and procedures
- Discussing behavior management techniques among staff to promote consistency

## Contingency Plans for Emergency Situations

**In case of a Fire, Natural Disaster, Or Situation Necessitating Evacuation of the Building:**(bomb threats, chemical spills, fire, etc) All children will be walked to Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, 61 Wood Street, Hopkinton, MA. All parents will be called by cell phone or phone at St. Paul's. Elmwood School has been designated as a shelter for extreme emergencies. All children would be transported by staff via staff private vehicles, or the center would walk to the shelter. **St. Paul's phone number: 508-435-4536**

**In the case of Power Outage:** TLC will stay open for one hour. If power is not restored, then parents would be called to pick up their children at the center. **(NSTAR): 800-592-2000**

**In the case of loss of Heat:** TLC will stay open for one hour. All parents would be called to pick up their children at the center if heat could not be restored. **Terry Oil: 508-435-6224**

**In the event of loss of Water:** We are to call the Hopkinton Water Department at **508-497-9765**. Alert them that TLC has no water and that we are a childcare center. If water is not restored within one hour, all parents would be called to pick up their children at the center.

**In the event of a Missing Child:** We are to call the Parents of the missing child and the Hopkinton Police Department. They are to be notified immediately. The child is searched for in all areas.

- After the Police and Parents of the missing child are called, the Director/Assistant Director will immediately notify EEC.
- The Director and Assistant Director will immediately conduct the search until the Police department arrives. All available staff shall help with the search.

# Emergency Procedures-Potential Threat Identified/Confirmed:

- Local reverse 911 calls are provided by the Town of Hopkinton
- Call 911
- Maintain Safety
- Listen to radio for instructions from authorities on whether to evacuate or "stay put."
- In the event that TLC needs to "stay put", the entire center would meet in the lower level of the building, until we were alerted that we could leave safely. All outside doors and windows would be kept closed and sealed. The school-age program will do the same in their building.
- Call Parents
- Follow emergency instructions from emergency response personnel.

The Learning Center maintains first aid kits and flashlights in each classroom. Non-perishable food items and a supply of water is on hand and would be used during an emergency situation.