



LITTLE BRITCHES

— Academy —

Parent Handbook

Revised November 3, 2022

Welcome to the Little Britches Family!

At Little Britches Academy, our goal is to make every day a learning adventure for every child! We strive to unlock and develop every child's true potential by providing a fun, safe and individualized learning environment. We are honored that you have chosen us, and we hope to become a part of your extended family in the coming years! We truly value the opinion of all our children and parents, and we always appreciate your feedback! Please let us know if there is anything we can do to be of assistance!

This handbook has been written to describe our program, policies and the myriad of practical details that go into making each day as safe, educational, fun, and impactful as possible for every child. Please review it and keep it for reference, as it will answer many of your questions.

Program Description

Little Britches Academy opened its doors to the families of Jacksonville on December 2, 1996. Our facility has operated continuously as a childcare center since 1988, we opened our second location in 2020. We are locally owned and operated and are licensed by the Department of Children and Families; License number: C04DU1399.

At LITTLE BRITCHES ACADEMY we believe that learning should be an adventure every day and that learning gained in the early years of a child's life is critical as a solid foundation for future success. We believe that children learn best through play and hands on learning.

We offer care for children aged six weeks through 12 years including participating in the Florida VPK program.

Fair Enrollment Practices Policy

LITTLE BRITCHES ACADEMY provides equal enrollment opportunities to all families without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, handicaps, or disabilities. We will provide reasonable accommodation for individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship.

Curriculum

We use the following state approved curriculum in each of our classrooms.

Frog Street

Frog Street is an innovative program that is specifically designed to accommodate all learners. This includes children with developmental delays as well as children whose native language is not English. Our program helps young children grow and develop in a fun, hands-on learning environment which includes science, music, art, and language development. Frog Street also has Conscious Discipline built into the daily activities. This helps children develop self-help skills such as breathing techniques to help calm children when they become upset, patience as well as caring for one another.

Enrollment Procedure

We encourage all families to tour the facility before signing their child up. Once the tour is complete and the parents and center staff believe it is a good fit to enroll the child the family is given an enrollment Packet. The registration fee must be paid, and enrollment packet must be filled out and returned on or before the child's first day of school.

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Section 1 – About LITTLE BRITCHES

1.1 Philosophy Statement

We believe that children are our future, and we are obligated to provide them with an environment that will stimulate and develop them to be happy, confident, healthy, and successful children in their earliest, most crucial years of life.

1.2 Mission Statement

Our mission is to operate an organization committed to providing a learning and nurturing environment for each of our children. With three main goals:

We will:

1. Help the children develop the needed knowledge, physical abilities, and social and emotional growth early on, enabling them to charge through life at their highest ability.
2. Help the parents treasure the development their children are receiving at Little Britches Academy and have the highest level of confidence by trusting their children in our care while they provide for their family.
3. Help the employees understand the importance of their role and experience a satisfying level of personal achievement and pride while assisting and experiencing each child's development.

1.3 Open Door Policy

Our door is always open to you! We encourage you to visit often, join us on field trips, daily activities, and lunch. Your child will enjoy it and we believe you will too. If you would like to volunteer in your child's classroom, ask the Director for more information on parent involvement.

We ask that parents who are dropping off children in the classroom not engage the teacher in extended conversation; this makes it difficult on the child and on the teacher. You may discuss classroom concerns with the Director at any time. We encourage your questions and welcome your input regarding your child and our program.

In situations where there is custody or domestic issues the following will apply:

- ◆ The center must be provided with the most recent certified copy of the court order and any amendments to the order, i.e. custody order or restraining order.
- ◆ The center will follow the orders of the court. Deviations from the court order are only made if there are written instructions from the custodial parent/s (joint custody will require both parent signatures).
- ◆ If a copy of a court order is not provided to the center, then both parents will have equal access to their child. According to Florida law, the center may not deny access to a child by parent without a court order.
- ◆ If a verbal or physical conflict occurs, the Center will contact the police.

Section 2 – FEES

2.1 Tuition

Tuition is based on reserved time and not on actual time that a child spends at the center. No reduction in tuition is given because a child is not in attendance at the center. Tuition is due for all days including holidays, sick days, emergency closings, and vacation days. Current tuition rates are posted at the entrance counter. Your child's tuition is determined by your child's age. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the director or assistant director each week to pay tuition.

2.2 Late Payment

Tuition is due each Friday for the following week. A \$10 late fee is charged if tuition is not received by this time. A \$30.00 late fee will be added on Tuesday, if tuition is not received then your child will not be allowed to return until it is paid in full.

If your child is enrolled in VPK or our before and/or after school program and classes are canceled because of a holiday, teacher in-service, storms, etc., an additional fee is charged for the child to attend Little Britches Academy all day.

Little Britches Academy can offer VPK for free because we are reimbursed by the state for each day that a child attends. We charge a separate "Extended" or "Wrap Around" Tuition for children who need childcare services before and/or after the VPK school day. This reduced fee is charged, because before and after care is not reimbursed by the state.

Tuition increases typically increase annually.

VPK, SCHOOL READINESS and School age tuition rates are based on holiday and vacation schedules.

2.3 Multiple Child Discounts

A \$10.00 per week discount is given for the second child.

2.4 Registration Fees

A non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 is required to enroll your child. Paying the registration fee places your child on the waiting list in front of those who have not paid the fee. If enrollment is

terminated at any time and your child returns to the center later, you will be charged to reregister your child.

2.5 \$10 Monthly School Supply and Activity Charge

We collect a School Supply and Activity Charge of \$10 per child each month. This charge is collected in order help our school purchase school supplies and pay for center-based activities. This charge does not cover costs associated with field trips.

2.6 Returned Check Fees/Collection Fees

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for a returned payment and Little Britches Academy retains the option to refuse any further payment by check. In the event tuition and fees are not paid, Little Britches Academy will institute whatever means are necessary to collect the past due amounts, including the use of a collection agency and potential collection via a lawsuit through the court system. The Registering Parent(s) agree to reimburse all costs of collection, including reasonable attorneys' fees. All past-due amounts are subject to an additional service fee of 0.5% per month payable to Little Britches Academy.

2.7 Late Pick Up Fees

The center closes at 6:00 pm. If your child is not picked-up before 6:01, you will be charged \$25.00 for every 15 minutes or part thereof per child until the child/children are picked up. The late fee must be paid for the child to return to the center. Excessive late pickups will result in termination from Little Britches Academy.

2.8 Refunds

Refunds are sometime necessary for billing corrections or various other reasons. They are made at the discretion of the Center Director, Executive Director, or President. Should a refund be required for any reason it will be issued the same way it was received.

SECTION 3 – ATTENDANCE AT LITTLE BRITCHES

3.1 Attendance / Vacation Policy

Little Britches Academy charges an annual tuition that we break down into weekly payments. In order to maintain your child's enrollment space, you are required to pay the standard weekly tuition rate for each week, whether your child is in attendance or not. This is a standard policy in the preschool industry and necessary because we must staff each classroom with teachers to meet the total number of children enrolled in the class.

For a very specific exception to this rule, which can be used up to twice per school year August – July, please see 3.2 below.

3.2 Half Price Exception (Applies to all ages except for VPK and School Readiness)

This exception applies to all age groups except for VPK and School Readiness children.

After your first 90 days, if your child misses an entire week of school you may qualify for ½ price tuition. You may take advantage of the half price exception up to 2 times total during in a 12-month August - July period.

In order to take advantage of the half price exception, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the director or assistant director one week in advance.

VPK, SCHOOL READINESS and School age tuition rates are based on holiday and vacation schedules. A Tuition guide is displayed on the front counter of the office that explains pricing during these times.

3.3 Holidays

Because we break down our annual tuition into 52 manageable weekly payments, we charge the same tuition rate on non-holiday weeks as we do on weeks containing one or more holidays. This means that parents/guardians effectively pay a little less for care on non-holiday weeks and more on holiday weeks for ease and consistency purposes. As is standard in the preschool industry, we do this as an alternative to having slightly higher rates on non-holiday weeks and slightly less on holiday weeks.

The following are holidays recognized by the Center:

Labor Day, Veteran's day, Thanksgiving day and the day after, Christmas eve and Christmas day, New Year's day, MLKing day, President's day, Good Friday, Juneteenth, July 4th, Memorial day.

Holidays that fall on Saturday or Sunday, are observed on either Friday or Monday.

3.4 Arrival at LITTLE BRITCHES

The center is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please bring you child to the center no later than 9:30 each day. We have found that children adjust much easier when their day has a schedule and routine. On occasions when your child has a doctor's appointment or other important event that prevents arrival prior to 9:30, please notify the center the day before. This affords the teacher an opportunity to pre-plan and more easily work your child into the day's events.

Please leave your cell phone in your vehicle and give your child your full attention during the transition from home to school.

Parents must turn their child over to center staff before leaving the class. **All** parents are required to sign their child into the center on the Daily Sign in/out binder in the lobby. The staff will sign all children in on Procure upon arrival into the classroom.

Please don't sneak away, but help your child become engaged in the ongoing activities in the classroom. This may require planning a few extra minutes each morning but will greatly benefit your child's transition into the classroom.

3.5 Special Requests

Parents must follow the policy for Administering Medication (see 5.7) if your child is to receive medication during the day. This should be taken care of during arrival time.

Parents are requested to notify the teacher or Director if there are any special needs or instructions for the child's day. Special requests may require a written submission of the change.

3.6 Absences

Parents are requested to notify Little Britches Academy if their child will not attend that day. This notice assists us to effectively maintain appropriate child to staff ratios.

Parents are requested to notify the center if their child is ill. This notification will assist the center to track any illnesses that may occur at the center.

3.7 Illnesses

Parents are requested to notify the Center Director if their child has a communicable disease so that parents of children in the classroom/center may be notified. Only information about communicable diseases is shared. The center will follow the center's Confidentiality Policy and procedures.

The center conducts a health check on each child upon arrival in the classroom. A child may be turned away from the center if staff deems the child is too ill to attend or is contagious.

If your child cannot go outside due to illness, or participate in normal activities, do not bring them to the center. If your child is well enough to come to the center, they are well enough to participate in all activities with no restrictions.

3.8 Biting Policy

At Little Britches Academy, we understand that biting can be frustrating for Children and Parents.

Infants, One's and Two-year old's often resort to biting in order to express themselves. We would like to work together to make sure that we minimize biting in our classrooms! Many times, toddlers will bite out of frustration, when they perceive that another child invades their space, or if they simply want a toy that another child is playing with. Our teachers make every attempt to spot and

separate children when one child shows signs of attempting to bite another. In most cases we can do this. However, it is unfortunately impossible to eliminate or prevent biting all together because it can often happen in a fraction of a second.

At Little Britches Academy we do the following after a biting incident:

1. We move quickly to the scene and get down to children's level. In a serious, firm tone our teacher makes a strong statement: "No biting. Biting hurts. I can't let you hurt Josie or anyone else." Next, we offer a choice: "You can help make Josie feel better, or you can sit quietly until I can talk with you." We help the child follow through on the choice if necessary.
2. We respond to the child who was hurt by offering comfort through words and actions: "I'm sorry you are hurting. Let's get some ice." We perform first aid if necessary. The child who did the biting can help comfort the bitten child—if both parties agree. We help the child who was hurt find something to do.
3. We talk to the child who did the biting. We maintain eye contact and speak in simple words using a calm, firm tone of voice. We try to find out what happened that led to the incident. We restate the rule, "Biting is not allowed." We model the use of words that describe feelings: "Kim took your ball. You felt angry. You bit Kim. I can't let you hurt Kim. No biting." We discuss with the child how he/she can respond in similar situations in the future.

After a child bites another child, we will follow our biting policy outlined below:

1. We will document the event and provide notification to the parents of both the biting child, and the child who was bitten. Parents are not notified which child bit their child.
2. We will require that the family of the biting child checks out one of our "Teeth are not For Biting" books from the Little Britches Library and reads it to their child.
3. After the first time your child bites another child, we will ask the parents to consider providing a teething toy that we can redirect the child too if they try to bite again.
4. If a child bites again, we will set up a meeting with the parents and discuss additional options including setting up a reward system, whereby the child gets a small reward for each day that they do not bite. We will work with the parents to reinforce good behavior and the reward system of the parent's choice throughout the day.
5. If a child continues to bite, we will continue a dialogue with the parents and continue to closely monitor the child's behavior, while looking for solutions together with the parents aimed at eliminating the biting behavior.
6. Depending on factors such as the severity and frequency of biting, as well as the child's other behavior, continued biting and/or a family's non-compliance with our biting policy may lead to the child's termination from our preschool. Termination is a last resort that we only use in order to protect other children in the classroom from repeatedly being bit by the same child.

3.9 Termination/Withdrawal from Little Britches Academy

The following list includes potential reasons childcare services may be terminated. Please note that this list is non-exhaustive. The center reserves the right to terminate childcare services at any time.

Childcare services may be terminated for a child's willful destruction of property, if the child poses a threat to the safety and welfare of children or teachers. Termination may also occur due to physical or verbal abuse from the child toward other children or teachers (includes hitting, biting, kicking and spitting). Termination may also occur due to physical or verbal abuse by the parent toward the center staff, having a delinquent account or refusal to follow center policies. As mentioned above, the center reserves the right to terminate childcare services at any time.

One-week written notice is required from parents who are withdrawing their child from the center. Any past due balance is due on the Monday of the last week of care. Balances remaining after 30 days are referred to the center's collection agency.

If a child is absent for one week and two days, without notification to the office, the child will be considered withdrawn from the program and the child's space will be filled. All tuition and any related charges are due and payable during this period. If space is available, the child may re-enroll, but the registration fee must be repaid.

3.10 Drop Off / Pick-up Policy

All parents are required to sign their child in and out of the center on the Daily Sign in/out binder in the lobby. The staff will sign all children in and out on the ProCare app as well as on the classroom attendance clipboard. Children are to be dropped off by a teacher and not left in the hallway or lobby areas.

The parent or authorized adult is responsible for supervision of the child until the child is handed off to the care of a teacher and once the child has been signed out of the classroom.

Parents are requested to handle any center business (payment, conferences with Director, etc) prior to checking the child out of the class.

On occasion, a parent may ask a staff member to pick up their children from Little Britches Academy. The staff member may do this as a convenience for the parent, however, the parent must add the staff member to their child's pick-up list. Once the staff member leaves the center with the child, the staff member is wholly responsible for the child. Keep in mind that the child's care under this circumstance is personal and **not** LITTLE BRITCHES ACADEMY business. Employees have no vehicle or personal insurance coverage from any LITTLE BRITCHES ACADEMY insurance policy at any time. By taking the child home, the staff member assumes full liability for the child.

If a parent or authorized adult appears to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs the staff will attempt to contact the other parent or authorized adult on the pick-up list. Little Britches

Academy does not have the right to deny the parent access to their child, but the staff will contact the police immediately if the center is not able to contact another parent or authorized adult to pick up the child.

If a child is not picked up by 6:30 p.m. and reasonable attempts to reach an authorized adult have failed, Little Britches Academy will contact the sheriff's office to report child abandonment and turn the child over to the sheriff's office.

3.11 Authorized Pick Up/Emergency Pick Up

Only authorized persons listed on the Enrollment Form are permitted to have access to your child and to remove your child from the center. The following procedures apply:

- ◆ The registering parents are required to complete the Enrollment Form and Medical Emergency Consent form at time of enrollment. Only persons listed on these forms are permitted to remove the child from the center.
- ◆ Persons on the authorized list but are unfamiliar to the staff will be required to show proof of identification with a picture I.D.
- ◆ Changes/updates to the Pick-Up list must be made on the original Enrollment Form located in the office.
- ◆ In an emergency, the center will contact the parents first. If the center is unable to reach the parents, the staff will call the persons on the Medical Emergency Consent form until someone is reached.

3.12 Little Britches Academy Anti-Idling School District Policy

Little Britches Academy is committed to becoming an IDLE-FREE school.

This policy applies to all passenger vehicles.

Rationale: Idling vehicles contribute to air pollution and emit air toxins, which are pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects. Monitoring at schools has shown elevated levels of benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and other air toxins during the [morning/afternoon] hour coinciding with vehicles picking up and dropping off students. Children's lungs are still developing, and when they are exposed to elevated levels of these pollutants, children have an increased risk of developing asthma, respiratory problems, and other adverse health effects. Limiting a vehicle's idling time can dramatically reduce exposure to these pollutants.

Purpose

Eliminate all unnecessary or avoidable idling by passenger vehicles, school buses, and delivery trucks.

Guidance:

1. When parents park their car to pick up / drop off their children, all engines should be shut off. Any additional children who are with the parent / guardian prior to pickup/drop-off should be brought into the school with the parent / guardian.

2. All drivers should turn off engines when they arrive at school and when they expect to be parked for more than 10 seconds.
3. Teachers may not spend their lunch break idling while in their vehicle.
4. The Little Britches Academy school bus shall not idle while in our parking lot or in elementary school parking lots while waiting to pick up children.

Little Britches Academy's goal is to reduce traffic congestion in the vicinity of the school and to improve the air quality by promoting an idle-free campus. For additional questions about this policy, please contact the school's administration office.

3.13 Attendance Policy for VPK

The VPK attendance policy changes from year-to-year (by the state), so the policy is prepared and provided to the parent during the VPK orientation meeting. Alternatively for children enrolled after orientation, we will provide this form to parents at the time of enrollment.

SECTION 4 – PARENT INVOLVEMENT

4.1 Parent Volunteers Little Britches Academy has an Open Door policy with all parents of enrolled children. Parents are not only welcomed, but also highly encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom. All visitors are required to sign in at the front desk before proceeding to the classroom. The Standards of Conduct (see 5.16), and Visitor Policies (see 5.17) always apply to all volunteers. Siblings of children in the program may not attend when a parent is volunteering in the classroom. Parents may be asked to help with certain tasks such as cutting out items for the classrooms, sharing information about their job or hobby or culture, chaperoning on field trips, donating items, and reading to a group of children.

4.2 Take Home Activities

Although Little Britches Academy does not assign "homework," we do send home suggested activities to enhance the learning taking place in the classroom. All classrooms will send home a weekly or monthly activity calendar that goes along with their curriculum.

4.3 Parent-Teacher Conferences

All parents/family are invited to attend scheduled formal parent/teacher conferences to review the child's progress, needs and set goals for the child. Conferences are scheduled two times during the year. Other conferences are scheduled as needed or as requested by parents or teachers.

We ask that parents who are dropping off children in the classroom not engage the teacher in extended conversation; this makes it difficult for the child and on the teacher. You may discuss

classroom concerns with the Director at any time. We encourage your questions and welcome your input regarding your child and our program.

4.4 Parent Surveys

Little Britches Academy is interested in your feedback. Parent surveys are distributed at random times during the year. Your responses help determine whether we are meeting the needs of our families and how we can improve. As you would expect, your suggestions are always welcomed.

4.5 Parent Bill of Rights

We believe that parents have rights and that their concerns are important.

A Healthy Learning Environment

- Parents can expect that their child is safe at the center, both physically and emotionally.
- Parents can expect that all children are treated fairly regardless of race, creed, national origin, economic status, gender, or age and that each child is treated as an individual.
- Parents can expect that the staff is experienced and trained in child development.
- Parents can expect that any cruel behavior among the children or between children and staff is not tolerated.
- Parents have the right to be treated with courtesy by all members of the staff.
- Parents have the right to participate in meaningful parent-teacher conferences to discuss their child's progress and welfare.
- Parents have the right to visit their child's class.
- Parents have the right to ask their child's teacher about a concern. If the teacher can't resolve the issue parent can then go to the office and speak to the Directors or Executive Director. Feedback is welcomed and used as a tool to improve the care that we offer.

4.6 Annual Events

March -	Spring Pictures	October-	Fall Festival
April -	Easter Egg hunt	November-	Thanksgiving
May/June-	VPK Graduation	December-	Christmas Party

SECTION 5 – HEALTH & SAFETY

5.1 Child Abuse and Neglect

All childcare personnel are mandated by the state to report their suspicions of child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional), neglect and abandonment. "Child Abuse or Neglect" is defined in s. 415.503(3), F.S., as 'harm or threatened harm' to a child's mental or physical health or welfare by the acts of

omissions of a parent, adult household member, or other person responsible for the child's welfare. The abuse hotline is 1-800-96-ABUSE.

5.2 Confidentiality of Records

All records of children and families are confidential. Written parental permission is required to release this information to a third party.

5.3 Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather

If the threat of a natural disaster such as hurricane, tornado, flooding, etc., is imminent, we will follow the Duval Public School System for closure guidance. Once the storm passes and is out of the area, we will assess the center for damage and re-open as soon as possible.

The following steps must be confirmed before opening the center:

- ◆ The center must have power and any physical damage must be repaired.
- ◆ Staff must be available to provide care for children at appropriate ratios.

Parents are responsible for childcare tuition even if the center is closed due to natural disaster.

5.4 Emergency Procedures

Fire drills are conducted 10 times per year, one as an alternate route, and one conducted during naptime. Lockdown/inclement weather drills are conducted twice per year. Should the need arise to vacate the property our safe space is Grace Luther Church 1220 McCormick Rd. All parents will be contact via the app if possible then direct phone calls.

5.5 Child Health Services

Little Britches Academy is required by the Department of Children and Families to have on file for each child a Physical and an Immunization Record. **You have thirty (30) days after enrollment to bring in the original forms: Physical Examination – Form 3040 and Immunization – Form 680.**

It is the parents responsibility to keep these forms up to date. If a child's physical or immunization is expired the child may not return until updated forms are provided.

5.6 Screenings

Observation/Screening is a process to determine whether a child has any developmental concerns that may require further evaluation and follow-up. Screenings conducted at the center may include vision, hearing, speech/language, nutrition, dental, and overall development. Observations are conducted two times per year and will help to identify your child's progress. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is used at least once per year as well as Frog Street assessments conducted throughout the year. Please find included in the registration packet a consent form for screenings.

Parents are informed in writing of results of screenings. At home activities may be recommended based on the results of the screenings. If further evaluation or services are needed, parents will be referred to the appropriate agencies or to their child's pediatrician. Additional screenings and parent conferences will be utilized as a means of follow-up on screenings that result in referrals to outside agencies.

5.7 Child Health Emergencies

All accidents and incidents, which occur at the center, are documented on a written Incident/Accident Report and shared with the parent/guardian on the day they occur. Parents are required to sign and date the report. If a person other than the parent picks the child up, a copy of the accident report will go home for the parent's review. If you notice a scratch, bruise, bite mark, or anything unusual about your child, please speak to the child's teacher or Director immediately. Occasionally incidents occur that the caregiver does not know about; the child may not have cried or did not tell the caregiver.

In an emergency, the center will contact the parents first. If the center is unable to reach the parents, the staff will call the persons on the Medical Emergency Consent form until someone is reached. Please you make sure that Director is aware of changes in phone numbers or emergency contact persons. Please keep this information up to date.

5.8 Medication Administration Protocol

Little Britches Academy will administer medication, with the signed permission of the parent or guardian,

The non-expired medication must be in its original container, dated and labeled with the child's first and last name.

Medication is not given on an as needed basis unless specific guidelines are provided by the child's physician.

You must complete an "Authorization for Medication Form" and return it to the office.

The form must include name, date, time, dosage, and route of medication.

We will not administer any over the counter medication to infants without permission from a physician.

We will not administer the first dose of any medication.

All medications must be kept in the office or in the refrigerator (as required). **Do not leave medication of any kind in your child's diaper bag or cubby.**

Medication can only be administered by staff that have taken the required DCF medication training.

5.9 Conditions of Short-Term Exclusion

A child will be placed on short-term exclusion, which may include non-admittance, when the illness and/or injury is contagious and/or poses a significant health and/or safety risk to other children and staff. Any children that are COVID positive will need to be excluded for a minimum of 5 days and will

require a negative test to return. If an additional test is not given the child will need to be excluded for 10 days and may return only if they are symptom free

5.10 Notification of Illness

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to inform staff if their child becomes ill from a communicable disease and of any other health/safety concerns.

As required by Florida's Department of Children and Families, if a child appears to have a communicable disease, staff will isolate the child away from the other children and immediately contact the child's parent/guardian to pick up their child. If pick up is required the child must be picked up within one hour.

Florida's Department of Children and Families requires that children are not allowed to return to the center until all symptoms have ceased. Depending upon the condition, children may not be allowed to return to the center without a physicians' authorization.

Florida's Department of Children and Families requires that Parents/Guardians immediately pick up their children if the following signs, symptoms, or conditions are present: 65C-22.004, FAC

- ◆ Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion. Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100⁰ F or higher.
- ◆ Diarrhea - runny, watery, or bloody stools.
- ◆ Vomiting - one or more times, vomiting that contains blood, or vomiting followed by severe cramping.
- ◆ Severe coughing - child gets red or blue in the face or to make a high-pitched whooping sound after coughing.
- ◆ Eye discharge - thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pink eye
- ◆ Difficult or rapid breathing
- ◆ Ear Discharge
- ◆ Untreated infected skin patch(es)
- ◆ Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool and yellowish skin or eyes.
- ◆ Conditions that commonly require parameters from a physician detailing when a child may return include, but not be limited, chickenpox, strep throat, scabies, impetigo, meningitis, and Hepatitis A.
- ◆ Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than staff can provide without jeopardizing the health and safety of the other children.
- ◆ Any other unusual signs, symptoms, or conditions.
- ◆ Head Lice (including nits) - Child can not return until the following day, with all nits removed and only with proof that treatment has occurred. Proof is a lice treatment product box or empty bottle.

To return to school your child must have a doctor's note or be symptom and fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication. If your child cannot go outside due to illness, or participate in

normal activities, do not bring them to the center. If your child is well enough to come to the center, they must be well enough to participate in all activities with no restrictions.

5.11 Dress Code

We request that children arrive at school in comfortable, easy to launder clothing. While we make every effort to protect their clothing, children can experience dirt and spills during planned activities. Please label all clothing items with the child's first and last name.

For the safety of the children, we do not allow open-toe shoes, flip flops, or sandals either in the classroom or during outdoor activities.

In case of accidents, we request every child keep a change of clothes at the center. Label each item with the child's first and last name and place the items in a sealed bag in the classroom.

5.12 Potty Training

We are happy potty train children at school if you are potty training at home. This is a team effort, and everyone must be on the same page for it to be successful. When a child begins potty training, you will be required to bring in several sets of extra clothes and washable shoes i.e., crocs or jellies. We will encourage/place the children on the potty every 30 to 60 minutes depending on the child and schedule used at home.

We will provide positive feedback and encourage children to use the potty and celebrate their success. We will in no way punish or reprimand children when they have accidents or force them to sit on the potty when they don't want to.

Please provide diapers, wipes, and pull-ups for your child if not potty trained. All items need to have the child's name on the package/container.

All children must be potty trained to attend the preschool classroom. If your child is not fully potty trained, they may not move out of the young preschool classroom.

5.13 Meals

We participate in the Florida Child Care Food Program. We provide an approved milk, soy milk or almond milk. A doctor's note is required if your child drinks almond milk. We provide a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and pm snack that is prepared on site. The weekly menu is displayed for your review in the lobby.

<u>Meal and Snack Times:</u>	7:00 – 8:00	Breakfast
	10:45-12:00	Lunch
	2:00 – 3:30	Snack

If your child is not in the center at the class's designated serving time, the parents are responsible for feeding the child.

Children are not allowed to bring any outside food to the center unless it is for dietary restrictions and the child has a doctor's note on file. Food from home must be a healthy alternative to our lunch. Candy, cookies or "junk food" will not be served.

Little Britches Academy works to offer alternatives for children with allergies as much as possible and can also prepare alternatives brought in from home i.e.. gluten free pasta or crackers subbed for whole grain options to accommodate dietary restrictions

Infants: We provide an approved milk or soy-based formula and jar food for your infant. You may provide your own formula and baby food if you desire. Bottles must have a lid and be labeled with infant's **first and last name**. We do not allow infants to have cereal in their bottle (choking hazard). Please provide diapers and wipes for your child. All items need to have the child's name on the package/container. Please have at least two complete changes of clothing for your infant. **All bottles must be prepared prior to bringing them into the center.**

Outside food may be requested for special events in this case there will be sign up lists located in the lobby for the event. Cupcakes are allowed to be brought in for birthdays but must be nut free.

5.14 Dietary Restrictions and Allergies

Little Britches Academy is a peanut free center and serves sunbutter in place of peanut butter. Please discuss any special dietary needs for your child with the Director. If your child does not eat the food provided by the center, a doctor's note will be required for any alternate food that the parent may provide.

5.15 Discipline Rationale

Discipline is the effective management of children's behavior with the goal of a self-disciplined child. The discipline management technique used is based on the situation and the individual child. All staff and volunteers will use the positive guidance methods listed below:

5.16 Discipline Procedures

1. Plan ahead to prevent behavior problems. Anticipate problems that may occur and provide intervention or directions in advance. (Ex: Limit number of children in centers. Have activities prepared so children do not have to wait.)
2. Establish clear and simple rules that are age-appropriate. Consistent reminders help reinforce limits. Rules should be stated in a positive way. (Ex: If a child is running, say, "Use your walking feet. Running feet are for outside," instead of "Don't run!")
3. Be a model for the desired behavior. Treat all children with respect and politeness. (Ex: The teacher has a leaky paint container in her hand. She needs to get to the sink. She asks the children who are in line at the sink if she could please use the sink out of turn, rather than simply cutting in front of the children. They agree, and she remembers to thank them.)
4. Help children to learn problem-solving skills. Give them the language they need to communicate feelings and needs to others appropriately. Work with them to come up with solutions to conflicts.
5. Give hugs and caring. The key to discipline is establishing a nurturing relationship with each child. Children need to know they are accepted and loved no matter how they behave.
6. Reinforce positive behavior. Remember to focus on the specific behavior you wish to see repeated. (Ex: "Jessie, you have worked so hard to put all the blocks neatly on the shelf. Fantastic job!")
7. Overlook small annoyances. Sometimes when a behavior is overlooked, not reinforced by attention, it disappears. Unless the behavior is aggressive, and someone is in danger of getting hurt, the teacher/caregiver might be wise to let the children work out the problem on their own.
8. Offer positive alternatives to a negative behavior. If a child's behavior is unacceptable, suggest alternative choices. (Ex: If a child is throwing blocks, the teacher intervenes by telling the child that blocks are for building. If the child wishes to throw something, he/she can throw a bean bag, or a ball.)
9. Re-direct or divert the child. Substitute an appropriate activity for the unacceptable one. Some behaviors that are inappropriate are temporary, or situation specific. In these cases, it is best to alter the environment by redirecting the child to another activity. (Ex: Two children who are good friends have begun to get irritated with each other. Intervene before things get out of hand by engaging them in a new activity.)
10. Help children see behavioral consequences. Since young children are self-centered, it is hard for them to see beyond their own needs. Help them to move from thinking only of themselves, to thinking of others by analyzing the consequences of their actions. Discuss their behavior in a non-judgmental way and encourage them to think about its impact on people, objects and events.
11. Provide relax-time. When a child is too upset to talk or listen, it may be necessary to remove the child from the situation for a period of no more than 2 minutes. The teachers will discuss what happened with the child.
12. Positive Behavior Charts. Some classes may use a positive behavior chart, if the classroom is following directions, working together the class will earn an item for their chart once the chart is full the class will be rewarded for their good behavior.
13. Voices. Teachers are encouraged to use a warm yet firm voice when talking to children. Teachers are expected to move down to their level and speak directly to him or her and show respect for the child. As necessary, the teacher may use a raised stern and authoritarian voice level to emphasize the importance of their message. Yelling and/or frightening voices are not used when disciplining a child. Trying to scare a child into appropriate behavior is not tolerated
14. Discipline Toolbox The office has a "Discipline Toolbox" book of common behavior problems and

strategies to address these issues in a preemptive and positive manner.

15. Implement Behavior Intervention Procedure when necessary (below).

5.17 Discipline Guidelines (limited by DCF)

1. Calm Down Area. A calm down area is provided in each classroom to give the children a place to go when they need to be alone or to calm down if they are upset. The calm down area has breathing techniques that the child knows from their curriculum to help the to regain control and to be able to express themselves when upset or frustrated. A teacher may suggest that a child go to the calm down area, or the child may go there on their own. A teacher will check on the child to see when they are ready to rejoin the group.
2. Voices. As necessary, the teacher may use a raised stern and authoritarian voice level to emphasize the importance of the message. Yelling and/or frightening voices are not used when disciplining a child.
3. Physical punishment. The use of physical force with children is prohibited. This includes pulling by the arm, grabbing children by the arm/shoulders/neck, hitting, pushing, shoving, etc.
4. Threatening. Children will not be threatened with physical punishment.
5. Ridiculing or Degrading. The use of name-calling, belittling, or comparison to other children is prohibited.
6. Withholding of meals, snacks, or water. Children are never denied food, water or any other food related item as a means of discipline.
7. Denying a rest. Children are never denied rest as a means of discipline.

If a child is exhibiting **extreme challenging behavior**, follow the Behavior Intervention Procedures:

- ◆ Provide relax-time (in class or office (office use is used on rare occasions, i.e. when the teacher believes best methods are not working).
- ◆ If the child is unable to regain control within 30 minutes, the parents or authorized persons may be contacted to talk to their child on the phone or pick up the child. If pick up is required the child must be picked up within one hour of contact either through phone or ProCare app.

5.18 Standards of Conduct

Little Britches Academy has guidelines of acceptable conduct that all parents, volunteers and visitors must abide by while on premises. All parties are expected to follow these guidelines and sign the Volunteer Log. We strive to provide a safe learning environment for you and the children. Volunteering in the classroom is strongly encouraged; however, the “Standards of Conduct” must be always adhered to.

- ◆ Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family. Refrain from stereotyping on basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.
- ◆ Follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and other staff members.
- ◆ Teachers must always supervise children. Children must not be left alone with a parent’s volunteer or visitor.

- ◆ Use positive methods of child guidance. Any use of corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse or humiliation is prohibited. Ask the teacher to assist with a behavior concern.
- ◆ Refrain from the use of any threatening physical contact or verbal abuse towards individuals connected with the program, other parents or volunteers.
- ◆ Refrain from smoking on the premises and during all center or parent activities. LITTLE BRITCHES ACADEMY is a "Smoke Free Environment."

5.19 Visitor Policy

All volunteers and visitors shall check-in with the office and obtain permission for the visitation.

Visitation by a non-enrolled child unaccompanied by his/her parent(s) or legal guardian is prohibited unless prior approval has been granted by the Director.

Only persons with legal authority to do so (such as Department of Children & Families personnel or law enforcement) are allowed to question a child on the property without the consent of the child's parents or legal guardian.

Because staff, children, and parents should always feel that the center environment is safe and not hostile, all visitors to the property shall comply with all policies while on property and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is not disruptive, threatening or abusive.

- ◆ Any parent, volunteer or visitor who is disruptive, threatening or abusive will be asked to relocate to a location in the facility where children are not present and where the matter can be discussed and resolved in a professional manner.
- ◆ If the person refuses to relocate or continues to act in an inappropriate manner, the person will be asked to leave the premises. If the person refuses to leave, staff will notify appropriate Sherriff's Office. Should the person subsequently return to the property and again act in a manner that is disruptive, threatening or abusive or if the initial incident is so extreme that the teachers are concerned about the person returning to the facility, the person shall be informed in writing that he/she may be prohibited from returning to property.
- ◆ Any person who believes that he/she has wrongfully been asked to not return to the property, must first leave the property as requested, but may subsequently appeal the decision in writing to the Director.
- ◆ A final decision will be made, and the person will be notified in writing that he/she may not return to the property except under expressed conditions.
- ◆ Notwithstanding the above, center personnel may notify the Sherriff's Office should any person cause the staff an immediate concern of safety.

5:20 Social Media/Technology Policy

This social media policy applies to parents, members of the Little Britches Academy staff, and volunteers. This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- ◆ Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat)
- ◆ Blogs
- ◆ Discussion forums
- ◆ Collaborative online spaces
- ◆ Media Sharing services (i.e. You Tube)
- ◆ Micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter)

As part of our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families. We therefore require that:

- ◆ No photographs taken within the preschool setting or at preschool special events and outings with the children, are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child. Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. (This excludes photographs taken by staff for use on the Little Britches Academy website, or the Procare App (see below) where permission is given).

- ◆ No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding preschool children, or staff or school business, which could be construed to have any impact on the school's reputation or that would offend any member of staff or parent associated with the preschool.

- ◆ Staff are advised to manage their personal security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with.

- ◆ Staff should not accept parents as friends due to it being a breach of expected professional conduct unless they already know them in a personal capacity before their child starts at preschool. Staff should avoid personal communication via social networking sites, with the children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity.

- ◆ If staff name the preschool or workplace in any social media they should do so in a way that is not detrimental to the preschool or its families.

- ◆ Staff should observe confidentiality as appropriate

- ◆ Staff should not share information they would not want children, parents, or colleagues to view.

- ◆ Staff and parents should report any concerns or breaches to the preschool director. Any member of staff, parent or volunteer found to be posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality, bring the preschool into disrepute or that are deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the school or other employees, or posting/publishing photographs of the setting, children or staff may face disciplinary action up to and including termination in line with the school's disciplinary procedures.

General guidelines for using social media:

- ◆ Personal security settings should be managed to ensure that information is only available to people you choose to share information with.

- ◆ Remember that no information sent over the web is totally secure and as such if you do not wish the information to be made public refrain from sending it through social media.

- ◆ Maintain professionalism, honesty and respect.

- ◆ Apply a “good judgement” test for every social media post you make.

Procare App Parent Communications Policy:

- ◆ Little Britches Academy provides a tablet in every classroom for the purpose of communicating, updating, and sending pictures and videos with families and parents.
- ◆ Communications should be done in a friendly, professional manner and consistent manner.
- ◆ Photos and updates should be sent daily. This enables our parents to feel a special emotional bond and connection to their child, teacher, classroom and the school throughout their day.
- ◆ Children who are on the “No Photos list” should not be sent out in group photos.
- ◆ If there is an injury to a child, you should inform the director or assistant director, so that we can reach out to the parent directly in person. The app should not be used to notify parents of a child’s injuries or to send images of a child’s injuries.
- ◆ The app should never be used in a way that casts a negative light on any specific child, staff member, family the center itself or any other person or entity.

Complaints

Should you have any questions, concerns, or complaints we have an open-door policy. We welcome all feed back good or bad as we feel that it is a necessary tool to providing the care that we feel your children deserve. All concerns are addressed in a confidential manner

5.21 Lock your Car

Please be aware that vehicles (including bicycles) in childcare parking lots are sometimes targeted by thieves and locking your valuables is imperative. Little Britches Academy has no responsibility for any damage or loss to vehicles, property removed from any vehicles, bicycles, or any other personal property. In the past, thieves have broken the door window of different cars and stolen the purse sitting in the front seat. This is notice that we have had things stolen from the parking lot; lock, protect and hide your possessions.

Little Britches Academy is a **No Firearm/weapon, No Smoking and No eCigarette/No Vaping facility.** Pursuant to Chapter 386, F.S. smoking, by anyone, is prohibited within the childcare facility, all outdoor areas of the center, during fieldtrips, and in vehicles when being used to transport children.

SECTION 6 – CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

6.1 Curriculum

See page 2.

6.2 Items from Home

The only items from home that are allowed are naptime items that do not need to go home daily. All naptime items should be clearly labeled with the child's name. We launder all naptime items weekly so they don't need to go back and forth each week. **Children should not bring toys to the center; Little Britches Academy will not be held responsible if any items are lost or broken while at the center.**

6.3 Field Trips

Beginning in our VPK program, field trips are used to enhance the children's learning opportunity. They are a great way to extend the curriculum and provide children with hands-on experiences. Teachers have specific goals and objectives when planning a field trip. Parents will be provided at least two weeks' notice for each upcoming field trip. Parents will be provided with the destination, time of departure, anticipated time of arrival, and time of return. Each child must have a signed field trip permission slip in order to attend each trip. Completed forms are kept on file for each child taking part in a field trip. Field trips are made in the Little Britches Academy buses.

6.4 Portfolio

Each child will have a portfolio which includes a sampling of the child's progress. Depending on the age of the child, these samples may include Ages and Stages Questionnaires, literacy and numeracy assessments, artwork, dictation, writing samples, pictures, anecdotal notes, photos, etc. Portfolios for infants and toddlers may also include copies of daily notes, growth charts, and other developmental checklists. Portfolios, including screening and assessment results and individualized goals, are to be shared with parents twice per academic year during scheduled parent conferences. If you would like more information on your child's portfolio, please see or child's teacher or the Director.

6.5 Transitioning Children from Class to Class

Transitions are done annually at the end of the summer/beginning of the new school year. Children are placed in classrooms according to their date of birth and will remain in their classroom all year. We do not move children midyear. The only exception to this is for our infants that may move at or before their first birthday. They would transition into the Wobbler your young toddler room. Transitions are made over the course of a week or less depending on each child. Some children need to go back and forth to the previous class visiting the new class for a few hours each day increasing it as the child grows more comfortable. If a child has a harder time going back and forth and does better in the new class right away they will stay in the new classroom.

6.5 Transitioning from VPK to Kindergarten

In May or June of each year, Little Britches Academy will provide activities to aid in the smooth transition of preschool children to kindergarten. These activities may include one or more of the following: the distribution of kindergarten registration and transition packets, and a graduation ceremony.

SECTION 7 – CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Little Britches Academy has adopted a character development curriculum that focuses on eight core character traits, as developed by the Broward County School District. Teaching children to rely on strong principles and ethics to make decisions and guide their behavior, prepares them to accomplish their goals, interact successfully with others, and succeed in life.

Citizenship

We define citizenship as knowing about the importance of class rules and the community we live in. We teach our children that their classroom is a community, where they can feel safe and be an important part of the group. With everyone feeling loved and appreciated, we set clear rules and consistent boundaries, allowing children to learn and appreciate classroom rules.

Cooperation

We teach children how to cooperate and work together through a variety of activities such as “circle time” in the morning, when children are encouraged to communicate their thoughts, ideas and plans for the day. Children listen with interest about what is ahead and select classmates to partner up with for the exciting projects of the day.

Honesty

We know how important it is to teach children to be truthful and honest. We teach honesty first by modeling it ourselves: teachers are honest with their student in age-appropriate ways, and we are genuine when responding to students’ concerns. We also teach children how to be honest with each other and we help them learn that dishonesty is not an effective way to get their needs met.

Kindness

Our teachers model kindness every day by being helpful, caring and considerate when engaging in communication with children, parents and co-workers, and we encourage our children to follow their teachers in being caring and considerate with one another. Children also have many opportunities throughout the day to practice kindness and care toward all living creatures: we have Blackberry and Honey our center bunnies that the children interact with.

Respect

All of our children learn about respect and consideration through a variety of approaches that our teachers incorporate in their daily routines.

Responsibility

At our preschools children learn to be reliable, accountable, and responsible by taking care of their classrooms. Classroom jobs are a shared responsibility and include cleaning up play stations, putting away personal belongings, watering plants, setting tables for snack and meals. With our youngest children, we use descriptive informal talk about the jobs at hand to gently prepare them to help when they are old enough.

Self –Control

At Little Britches Academy self-control is understood as the ability to have discipline over one's behavior and actions. When children behave inappropriately or act-up in school, teachers help the child identify what they need or why they are upset. Then, we teach the child to get their need met in a healthy and appropriate way.

Tolerance

To us, tolerance means respecting and accepting the values and diversity of our preschool families . Children in our preschool learn to appreciate and practice tolerance by learning about diversity and difference. For example, in each classroom a family tree poster is displayed that is decorated with family photos of each child, showing that we value and cherish each student's family.

Little Britches Academy Parent Handbook Agreement Form:

Date _____

I have read the Little Britches Academy Parent Handbook located on the center's website littlebritchesmccormick.com or littlebritchesmandarin.com. By signing below I state that I have read and understand all policies and guidelines stated within.

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

Name of Child(ren) (Please Print): _____

Please return this form to the director or assistant director.

Form Revised: 11/3/2022