

LITTLE RANGERS LEARNING CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK

Welcome to Little Rangers Learning Center! We are honored that you have chosen Little Rangers Learning Center (LRLC) for your child's early learning experience. We expect our families to have questions to get acquainted with our program, and this handbook will help you understand our learning center and operational policies further. We reserve the right to update this handbook at any time with the approval of our Board of Directors, however we will give families at least a month's notice about updates giving time to read, understand, and acknowledge any changes to our policies. Please take a few minutes to become familiar with this information as it outlines Little Ranger's family expectations, policies, and procedures. After reading the following material in its entirety, please sign and return the parent acknowledgement page and keep this handbook for reference.

Our relationships with families are vital for our Center's success. This handbook is meant to support, uphold health/safety standards set by licensing, and communicate best with families of LRLC. This handbook serves to provide a broad overview of the Center and provide the information needed for decision making and implementation of best practices. We have attempted to be as comprehensive as possible but we also recognize that no handbook can answer every question. If you don't find the answers you need in this document or need clarification on any points, please ask the Center Director.

As the parent/guardian, you are responsible for reviewing this information, asking questions and following the policies and practices specified in each section.

Our Story: LRLC is a unique Learning Center in West Yellowstone, Montana. We offer excellence in the programs for children from infancy through age five.

LRLC was envisioned and created by Arne and Stephanie Siegel - officially established in June of 2018 by a small, dedicated group of community members who saw a great need to provide early childhood education with the community of West Yellowstone.

LRLC is a non-profit learning center whose curriculum encompasses developmental practices for age appropriate and safe learning experiences. Our teaching staff is fully qualified and licensed through the State of Montana. LRLC embraces multi-aged classrooms that are prepared with healthful, enticing, and age-appropriate learning experiences.

Our programs are designed to meet the early-years developmental needs of the children of different ages, ethnicities, and races. These needs go beyond academics. We endeavor to provide an experience that creates a foundation for students to develop characteristics needed to succeed in the larger community.

During the years from its inception, LRLC came to be known as an exceptional learning opportunity for the youngest members of West Yellowstone. The school's strength is its unique ability to develop the child's potential from infancy through age 5 or 6 in a safe, relaxed, yet challenging atmosphere that promotes a passion for learning.

Our Mission: To create an early learning environment for young children that encourages creativity, independence, self-confidence and inquisitive learning. It is our hope that each child leaves LRLC with the ability to be a kind and contributing member of their community and a steward of their environment.

Our Philosophy: We encourage children to learn at their own pace in ways that are best for them. Positive adult role models and peer interactions help children to develop good work habits and a positive sense of self.

Our Goals: Our curriculum goals reflect the Montana Early Learning Standards which promote the social, emotional, cognitive (intellectual) and physical development of each child. These standards "ensure that children from birth to age five have the skills and knowledge needed to achieve success in learning and reach their full potential in life." While striving to attain maximum development in these areas, LRLC's prime concern is the child's emerging sense of self-esteem.

Our Curriculum Focus: Our center is a developmentally appropriate learning environment for children and is play-based. Play is a young child's natural medium for personal growth and all forms of learning. They are masters of play. In fact, play is their "work". It is serious business and pure fun.

Our developmental focus influences all aspects of the center 's daily activities, selection of materials, daily schedule plans, and how we communicate with children and families. All of these activities support our mission, philosophy, and goals.

Role of Board of Directors and Staff:

- **Board Members-** Responsible for fundraising activities and for the organization/facilitation of the Center.
- **Director-** Responsible for hiring staff, recruiting families and students, ensuring compliance with all licensing requirements, and day-to-day operation of the Center.
- **Staff-** Responsible for daily activities, scheduling field trips, behavior management/guidance, developmental assessments and record keeping, and health and safety of children.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Location: 520 Yellowstone Avenue, West Yellowstone, Montana 59758

Telephone Number: 406-602-4110

Ages Served: 8 weeks to 5 years (before entering kindergarten)

Hours of Operation: Currently 8:00am - 4:00pm, Monday-Friday; with limited extended hours of 7:30am - 5:00pm Monday - Friday

Staffing: Each staff member meets or exceeds all qualifications required by the State of Montana. Roles vary within the Center. All staff members work together to develop/implement daily curriculum and structure activities within the facility.

Child to Adult Ratios:

Infants (up to 11 mo.)	4:1
Toddlers (12-23 mo.)	6:1
2 year olds	8:1
3-5 year olds	10:1

Calendar and Schedule (Appendix B): LRLC is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm with the exception of posted holidays, training days, and limited extended hours from 7:30am-5:00pm. Our academic year follows that of the West Yellowstone school district’s calendar. While we strive to avoid changes to our operating hours, LRLC retains the right to alter our calendar at any point during the year. Updates to our calendar will be communicated to families via brightwheel.

Closures and Holidays: The academic year calendar will inform you of any upcoming closures. The Center will close five times a year for Teacher Professional Development Days, these will be on the school year calendar that is released at the beginning of the school year of each year. If the Center will be closed, we will inform parents as soon as possible so that alternative childcare can be arranged.

LRLC requires a minimum of 4 full day children to keep the center open. According to the Montana licensing regulations, the center director or a lead teacher must be on site during operating hours. If both are absent, the center will have to close.

ENROLLMENT

Admission Requirements: The following documentation must be completed *before* services can be provided. Once you have completed the admission process and are notified of an open spot, you will begin the enrollment paperwork to finalize enrollment. All enrollment forms must be turned in *prior* to your child starting at LRLC. Via Brightwheel, we will provide you with the enrollment packet, which includes records of immunization, policy form, medical release, medication form, the emergency contact form, and other forms required by the Center and Montana state licensing.

- Emergency Contact & Parental Consent
- Registration Agreement
- Authorization Form for Over the Counter (OTC) Medication
- Outdoor Activity Authorization Form
- Copy of Immunization Record
- CACFP Food Program Eligibility Form
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Receipt
- Photo Consent Form
- Infant Safe Sleep & Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome Forms
- Infant Feeding Schedule (Under 1 year only)
- Little Rangers Learning Center Policy Agreement

The Center's enrollment fee must accompany the completed enrollment packet to ensure the child's placement in the program.

Pre-Enrollment Participation: All parents are required to spend time with their child in the program before the child's first day of attendance.

Infant Program – 10 hours
Preschool 2s – 6 hours
Preschool 3+ - 4 hours

TRIAL ENROLLMENT

At LRLC, we understand that all new students have a transition period to adjust to their new classroom and environment, and we will do our best to support all students to be successful at Little Rangers Learning Center. However, all new students are subject to a two-week trial period during which staff will monitor the integration of the new student to our Center. As with all students, any challenges relating to the student's enrollment - including but not limited to behavioral disruptions, aggression towards self or others, developmental challenges the Center is not equipped to support, or any issue that jeopardizes LRLC's ability to provide a safe, nurturing educational environment for all students and staff – will be discussed with the family with the intention of resolving these issues via an action plan based on best practices that is agreed to by both staff and family. If the issues are unable to be resolved, Little Rangers reserves the right to discontinue services for that child. If during the first four weeks of attendance, either the parents or the LPLC staff/administration feels this is not the best placement for the child, care will be discontinued. The enrollment fee and unused tuition will be refunded.

Reporting Concerns: We pride ourselves on being a small, close-knit community of caregivers/teachers and families. Please keep the lines of communication open with the Director and staff. We are happy to address any questions/concerns you may have regarding the care of your children. Should an issue arise that you feel is beyond the control of the Center Director or Board of Directors, you may contact our licensing officer, Teri Whitesitt, at (406)-522-2271.

The board of directors and staff reserve the right to adapt existing and implement new policies as deemed necessary. A minimum one-month notice will be provided for any policy change.

Activities support all areas of development:

- **Social:** to help children feel comfortable in their environment, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.
- **Emotional:** to help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.
- **Cognitive:** to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- **Language:** to help children communicate effectively with the world around them. LRLC intentionally creates a language rich environment throughout the Center by modeling appropriate words, using books, songs, or fingerplays to make language fun, and responding to

children's verbal and/or non-verbal communications. Sign language and foreign language exposure are implemented from day one in our program.

- **Physical:** to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and to feel confident about what their bodies can do.

We will be implementing the Creative Curriculum for infants/toddler/twos and preschool for the 2023-2024 school year. This program is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum. "The Creative Curriculum®" provides the resources and best practices to promote positive child outcomes through engaging, meaningful, and individualized experiences." ("The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Guided Edition" by TeachingStrategies). Learning is planned out with scope of the concepts in this curriculum and skills as well as the sequence in which they are introduced.

Teaching Methodology:

- Establishing predictable, consistent expectations lets children know what to expect and allows them to be more responsible, successful decision makers.
- Positive praise leads children to self - confidence.
- Providing predictable routines each day reduces anxiety and encourages trust and independence.
- Teacher language is carefully chosen to provide specific direction and utilize positive phrases throughout the day.
- Teachers intentionally create a language rich environment for all children.
- Curriculum reflects the children's interests. What the children want to learn is more important than what the teacher wants to teach.
- Sensitive, observant teachers can make use of "teachable moments" that stimulate learning for all ages.
- Teachers bring each child's home culture and language into the shared culture of the Center.
- Activities include concrete learning experiences with materials and people relevant to the children's life and family.
- Teachers extend the child's thinking by posing problems, asking questions, making suggestions, adding complexity to tasks and providing information, materials, and assistance.
- Children have the opportunity to play, work together with other children, make choices, and encounter the consequences of those choices.
- Parents are viewed as vital partners in the educational process.

Non-Discrimination: LRLC is open to all children and their parents regardless of race, creed, color, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

Facility Qualifications: LRLC is governed and licensed by the Montana Department of Health & Human Services. Under their jurisdiction, we are a licensed childcare center for children from 8 weeks to 5 years old. Each year the facility is inspected for fire, health and safety, record-keeping, and curriculum content. We are inspected yearly by the State Fire Marshal, County Sanitarian, and the County Health Inspector/Nurse. As a licensed childcare facility, many issues such as child to adult ratios, educational qualifications of staff, health and safety issues, etc. are specifically defined and are not negotiable. If you have any questions about licensing regulations, discuss the issue with LRLC's director. Copies of the regulations are available for reference in the Center's office or online.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

LRLC offers two program options. Each program has been designed to meet the developmental needs of the children it serves.

Infant-Toddler Program: Our Infant Program accommodates the needs of children from eight weeks through 2 years of age. All young children are provided with the freedom to explore and interact with other children and trusted adults. Time is provided for uninterrupted play within a safe, challenging and nurturing environment.

Preschool/PreK Program: Our Preschool Program serves children two through five years of age. The curriculum is designed to reflect the fact that children at this age are growing in every area of development (socially, physically, emotionally and cognitively).

The staff plans developmentally appropriate activities and each environment offers the child many opportunities for challenge, stimulation, and success. Specific curriculum areas are integrated into daily activities. These areas include art, language development, science, creative movement, drama, mathematics, music, and social studies. Children have the freedom to make choices in a safe environment that has been designed to meet all their unique developmental needs.

The daily schedule for each classroom may change based on individual children's needs and group dynamics. The following descriptions may help provide a sense of what happens during the day.

Infant-Toddler Daily Schedule (8 weeks to 2 years)

Note: "When infants and toddlers are part of familiar activities and routines, they develop relationships with the people they interact with and gain a sense of self-confidence. As older toddlers and young

children grow, they can follow routines, demonstrate emerging independence, and adjust to change more easily.” - HeadStart on The Importance of Schedules and Routines.

The activities of the infant-toddler program are dictated by the individual needs of each child. Each child may eat at a different time and sleep at a different time. Therefore, it is very difficult to describe what each day will look like. It is the child’s primary caregiver’s responsibility to ensure that the child’s individual needs are met as well as the group.

8:00 – 8:30	Children and Families Arrive AM Snack and handwashing
9:00 – 9:30	Literacy (books, songs or flash cards) individually or as a group Diaper changing and hand washing
9:30 - 10:00	Circle Time and Group Activity
9:35 – 10:45	Outside walk (weather permitting) Free play and or exploration of classroom
10:45 – 11:30	Diaper changing Lunch
11:30 - 12:15	Outside time/gross motor
12:15 – 2:30	Diaper Changing Naptime followed by diaper changing when awake
2:30 – 3:00	PM snack and handwashing
3:00 – 4:00	Free Play/interest areas/quiet time with books or other calming activities Last diaper change of the day Getting ready to go home; transition to parents
4:00	Center closes

Preschool Daily Schedule (2-4 year olds)

At this stage, children’s routines are becoming more consistent, though some variation is normal. More structured learning begins to take place, which means Brightwheel updates may not be as frequent as in the infant and toddler rooms.

Potty training is a normal part of development for this age group and will be in partnership with the parent as well as child readiness. Parents will receive updates through Brightwheel about their child’s potty training progress. Once a child is fully potty trained, potty updates will decrease. Restrooms are always accessible both indoors and outdoors (summer), and teachers provide reminders and opportunities before and after scheduled activities to use the bathroom.

Daily interest centers will include the following curriculum areas:

Literacy	Math	Sensory motor
Language development	Fine motor	Music
Gross motor	Manipulatives	Social interactions
Science	Emotional awareness	

Classroom routines are seen as a valuable source of curriculum and teachable moments.

8:00 – 8:30	Children and Families Arrive AM Snack and handwashing
9:00 – 9:30	Free Play in Centers/Individual literacy or writing activity with teacher Clean up Toys
9:30 - 10:30	Circle Time (Attendance, Pledge of Allegiance, Calendar, Song, Weather,Theme/Literacy) Group Activity
10:45 – 11:30	Lunch and Handwashing
11:30 - 12:45	Outside time/free play gross motor
1:00 – 3:00	Quiet Time/Naptime
3:00 – 3:30	PM snack and handwashing
3:30 – 4:00	Free Play in Centers/Outside activity Last diaper change of the day Getting ready to go home; transition to parents
4:00	Center closes

Transitions:

When a child is ready to transition to the next classroom, the teacher will communicate the child’s readiness to the parents. The child will be given ample opportunity to visit and get to know the new

classroom before they move up. Parents will be given the opportunity to meet their child's new teacher and visit the new classroom as well. If a parent has any questions or concerns regarding the process of transitioning, they are encouraged to speak to the teachers or Director.

Our classrooms are:

1. Infants (Buffalo)- age 0-1
2. Toddlers (Moose)- age 1-2
3. Twos (Bears)- age 2-3
4. Threes (Wolves)- age 3-4

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Tuition: Full-time or part-time tuition is available at LRLC. Check with the Director for a current tuition schedule.

Parents will be given two, week-long credits during each school year (September-August) charged at half their rate of tuition. These two weeks may only be used for consecutive days in weekly increments and must be approved by the director at least 2 weeks ahead of time.

LRLC uses Brightwheel for all billing purposes. Families will receive, view, and pay their bill in Brightwheel. In addition, families can view and print their statements in Brightwheel. See the current tuition schedule for this year's tuition rates and applicable fees. The following billing schedule will be enforced:

Annual Supply Fee: An annual supply fee of \$25 will be billed during the month of September/October.

Payment of Tuition: Invoices are posted in Brightwheel the first working day of the month. Tuition is payable through BrightWheel, cash, or check. Payment can be deposited into the fee box if the director is unavailable to collect payment. A receipt will be issued and the payment logged in Brightwheel.

Late Tuition: Full-time tuition will be paid in full the Friday after invoices are received and is considered to be late that same day after closing. A late fee of \$100 will be applied if no payment has been received by the 10th of the month. The fee will increase to \$200 on the 15th of the month. Non-payment of tuition may result in cessation of childcare services. LRLC reserves the right to terminate services for families that have not paid tuition by the end of the month. Services may resume once tuition and late fees have been paid in full. Any days missed as a result of this termination will not be discounted or credited.

Registration Fees: A registration fee of \$50.00 per child is due before the child begins attending the program. This fee is not refundable for any reason. If the child is removed from the Center, an

additional re-enrollment fee of \$50.00 will be charged. If space is not available at that time, the child will be placed on the Center's waiting list.

Waitlist Fee: A one time fee of \$100 will be charged for a place on the center's waitlist. This fee will be applied toward the first month's tuition once a spot is available and is non-refundable.

Scholarships: LRLC is proud to support families in accessing quality childcare. We understand the financial hardships and instability that can come with living in a tourism-based community. In partnership with our monthly donors, we are able to offer discounts on a case-by-case basis for families experiencing temporary hardships.

Priority is given to families who contribute their time and resources to the center and who actively help maintain a healthy, supportive environment.

More information about this opportunity, including a scholarship application, is available from the Center's Director. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Directors to ensure a fair and transparent process.

HEALTH, SAFETY & NUTRITION

Immunizations: Children attending all licensed and registered Montana child care facilities are required to be immunized against certain diseases. Minimum child immunization requirements apply to children in all child care facilities with exceptions described in ARM 37.96.805.

Before a child may attend any licensed or registered Montana child care program, a program must be provided with documentation that the child has been vaccinated, as required for the child's age group, against measles, rubella, mumps, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, varicella, hepatitis B, pneumococcal disease (pneumonia), and Haemophilus influenza type B, unless the child qualifies for conditional attendance in accordance with or has a medical or religious exemption.

Parents can find materials on current immunization requirements at the childcare and school resources page at <http://immunization.mt.gov>.

Daily Wellness Checks: Each morning when your child arrives, we will conduct a daily health check. This is a quick physical observation where we check and observe a child's behavior/mood and physical condition, including breathing, skin, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Additionally, we ask that you please alert us of anything out of the ordinary we need to know regarding sleep, appetite, bowel movements and urination, mood, and behavior at home and/or unusual events.

Illness Policy: To prevent the spread of illness and provide a healthy environment for all, a staff member will assess each child's health upon arrival. Any child showing signs of illness will be excluded from LRLC based on the state guidelines listed below. **We realize that it is difficult for working parents to keep their children home, but exclusion from school will help prevent contagion and promote the health and safety of your child.** Children will be kept home from school if they are feverish, have diarrhea and/or vomiting. Children are also advised to stay home if they have nasal mucous discharge that isn't

clear, which is a sign of the body fighting illness. Any illness including listlessness/drowsiness, productive cough, sore throat, ear pain, eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge are also signs of underlying illness. **If your child cannot comfortably participate in the day's usual activities or your child needs to stay indoors and/or have additional rest, these signs are generally indicative that the child should not be at school.**

Exclusion from the Program: If your child becomes ill during the school day, every effort will be made to make them comfortable, away from the other children but with a familiar caregiver. A parent will immediately be called or messaged by Brightwheel to come and pick them up. **LRLC is not able to provide arrangements to care for children who are showing symptoms of illness or lethargy. Parents are required to respond as soon as possible and to pick the child up within one hour when contacted by Little Rangers staff.** If we cannot reach the parent within thirty minutes, we will reach out to the family's emergency contacts as stated on enrollment forms. If a parent is unable to pick up their child within one hour, they must arrange for an approved contact to pick up the child. If the illness warrants, the child's pediatrician will be contacted for consultation.

All licensed and registered child care providers must designate a staff member to check daily the health status of each child immediately upon that child's entry into the child care facility. All licensed and registered child care providers must exclude any child or staff member with an illness until symptoms have resolved, adequate treatment has been received, or a health care provider states that the person is noninfectious. The following symptoms or illnesses require exclusion:

- a fever of 100.4 F that is accompanied by behavior change or other symptoms;
- diarrhea;
- vomiting more than two times in the previous 24 hours;
- mouth sores with drooling, if unable to contain drool, unless a health care provider states that it is a noninfectious condition;
- a rash with fever or behavioral change or a rash that is quickly spreading, unless a health care provider states that it is a noninfectious condition;
- active tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the person is noninfectious and can return;
- group A strep pharyngitis (strep throat) until the person appears well and at least 12 hours after beginning appropriate antimicrobial therapy;
- impetigo, until treatment is initiated and if lesions on exposed skin are covered with a waterproof dressing;
- head lice, scabies, or ringworm, until treatment is started. Children and staff can remain in the child care setting until the end of the day;
- Chickenpox (varicella), until sores have dried or crusted. Child care providers must not purposefully expose susceptible children to chickenpox, even with the permission of the susceptible child's parents/guardians;
- rubella, until seven days after the rash appears;
- pertussis, until five days after antibiotic treatment was initiated;
- mumps, until five days after onset of parotid gland swelling; (n) measles, until four days after onset of rash;
- hepatitis A, until one week after onset of illness or as directed by the local health authority;

- shigellosis, salmonella, or E. coli, until a local health authority clears the person for readmission; or if the child is unable to participate in activities or needs care from staff that compromises the health or safety of other children.

Requirements to return to the Program after Exclusion:

- (a) the child shows no symptoms of illness.
- (b) the child has been free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours.
- (c) the child has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours for bacterial infections.

If the child returns to LRLC without following the above requirements to return or if the symptoms reoccur, he/she will be excluded for an additional 24 - hour period.

Dispensation of Medication: Medication Authorization Per licensing requirements, the State of Montana Medication form is required to be completed, signed, and approved for staff to be able to administer prescription and non-prescription medications. Only staff who have taken training in Medication Administration can administer prescription and non-prescription medications as listed below:

Prescription Medications must:

- be handed to a teacher or staff (not left in child's cubby)
- be kept in the original container
- be labeled and provided by a pharmacist
- be labeled with the date and child's first and last name
- contain specific legible instructions for administration and storage

Non-Prescription Medications (including Tylenol, Cough Syrup, Motrin, and Benadryl) must

- be handed to a teacher or staff (not left in child's cubby)
- be kept in original container
- be provided by the parent
- be labeled with child's name

A Medication Log will be recorded and shared with the parent via Brightwheel or a hard copy sent home at the end of the day. The original medication log will be kept in the child's file. The staff person administering the medication will record the date, time, medication, and dosage with their signature. Medications are stored at the recommended temperature, in a safe child-proof location. When the medication expires, the parent will be asked to take home the medication for disposal. Lock boxes are provided in the Seely and Forsythe Rooms for additional secure storage of prescription medications that can be life-threatening.

Medication will be administered as directed on the Medication Authorization Form only by the Director or another teacher who has been properly trained. The Director (or teacher) will then fill out a Medication Administration Log for each child who received medication as a record that it was given as authorized by the parent or guardian.

Over-the-Counter Medications (Non-Ingestible): Parents and guardians may give Little Rangers Learning Center a standing authorization for up to 12 months to apply over-the-counter topical ointments, topical teething ointments, or gels, lotions, creams, and powders, such as sunscreen and diapering creams to their child, when needed. The Over-the-Counter Form (included in the enrollment packet annually) must be completed before we can administer. Little Rangers does not provide sunscreen. Please apply sunscreen to your child before arriving at the center and dress them in hats/visors and tightly woven clothing to help prevent sunburn during outdoor play. Little Rangers staff will reapply sunscreen provided by the parent in the afternoon before going outside when we have an up-to-date over-the-counter topical medications form signed by the guardian.

Outdoor Policy: We like to spend time outdoors in all seasons. We consult the Child Weather Watch guidelines for safe outdoor play, which means we try to take the kids outside when the “feel like” temperature is between 15-90 degrees Fahrenheit. This time is important for your child’s health, growth, and development. Please make sure your child has the appropriate clothing to play outdoors. Please remember that if your child is too sick to go outside, he or she is too sick to be at school.

Transportation: LRLC does not provide transportation to or from the center.

Belongings from Home: Your child will be provided with stimulating, educational toys every day. Special objects such as a blanket and one stuffed animal are okay for rest time in the Toddler through Preschool rooms. **Please leave other toys and belongings at home, as bringing a treasured object to school can create tension between children and stress for children and staff if something is lost or misplaced. Toy weapons (guns, water pistols, swords, shields, or other items that resemble weapons) are not permitted at LRLC.** Use of personal electronics is not permitted in the classroom. We cannot assume responsibility for lost or damaged personal belongings.

First Aid: Staff must maintain a complete, well-stocked, portable first aid kit. The first aid kit must accompany staff and children on trips away from the facility and must contain:

- (a) sterile, absorbent bandages;
- (b) antiseptic wipes or product to clean wounds and hands;
- (c) a cold pack;
- (d) tape and a variety of adhesive bandages;
- (e) tweezers and scissors;
- (f) and disposable single use gloves.

Child care staff must take appropriate precautions to minimize the risk of any child suffering sunburn, heat stroke, or receiving insect bites. Children under six months old should be kept out of direct sunlight. Sunscreen must be applied to children over six months old when outdoor conditions dictate. (37.96.506)

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Our staff is certified in Pediatric First Aid, Adult and Infant First Aid/CPR/AED. While we do our best to ensure constant safety of your child(ren), accidents may happen. If an accident or injury occurs, first aid

will be administered, the parents shall be notified through Brightwheel, and a report form completed in the Accident Report Record. If emergency treatment is necessary, 911 will be called as indicated as well as the parent will be called immediately, and the child will be taken to the hospital accompanied by school personnel. If child poisoning is suspected, poison control will be called at 1-800-222-1222 and parents will be contacted. The following first aid procedures will be applied:

- **Nosebleed:** Pinch bottom of nose shut. Lean forward on a chair. Clean the child's hands and face.
- **Choking:** Encourage the child to keep coughing. May have to perform Heimlich maneuver.
- **Bee sting:** Ice or make a paste of baking soda and water.
- **Fever:** Take temperature and call parents.
- **Throwing up:** Call parents. Give water and lie down to wait for pick up.
- **Hits head:** Ice the "egg," keep the child calm and monitor.
- **Cuts and scrapes:** Clean area. Apply Band-Aid if needed.
- **Falls and cuts inside mouth:** Rinse with water, ice, and keep calm.

CPR Response Plan: The childcare facility will ensure timely cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) by maintaining all staff Pediatric CPR and First Aid certified on-site at all times. Staff will be trained in age-appropriate CPR techniques for infants and toddlers and will respond immediately to any life-threatening emergency. Emergency services (911) will be contacted as soon as CPR is initiated, and another staff member will retrieve emergency contact information and notify administration. The child will be taken to the hospital accompanied by school personnel and an accident/injury report will be filled out by the staff member accompanying the child and reported to our childcare licensor.

Accident/Injury Report Procedures: In the event of an accident, the child will be assessed, and appropriate supplies and next steps are applied. The child will be comforted as best possible when any injury occurs, and any injury that includes blood, bruises, bumps, or broken skin or requires medical attention will have an incident report recorded in brightwheel. Incident reports include a picture of the injury, description of what happened, and how it was handled. Parents receive a notification that an incident report has been added to their child's profile. Injuries are broken down into 3 categories as follows.

For injuries which seem serious, the family will be notified immediately to determine next steps, and an incident report will be recorded. Major Injuries Injuries that are serious or a child is experiencing a suspected medical emergency. In these instances, LRLC staff will immediately call 911 and then contact the parent, guardian, or emergency contacts listed in the child's file. If the incident requires emergency services, hospitalization, or medical treatment, a copy of the report must be provided to the

parents/guardians of the children involved, and a copy retained on file at the child care facility. The provider must also inform CCL within 24 hours of the incident.

For injuries that include a fall on the neck, back, or head that result in pain or disorientation, the family will be notified immediately. If we cannot reach a parent, guardian, or emergency contact, we will call 911 to assess that injury. If a child must be taken by an ambulance, a staff member will take the child's emergency information and accompany them. LRLC staff will not leave the child until a parent, guardian, or emergency contact arrives. If a child is suspected of having ingested any poisonous or toxic substances, we will immediately call the Poison Control Center at **1(800)222-1222** and then call the parent to communicate next steps. If a parent is not responding an emergency contact will be notified. The child will stay with an appointed teacher or administrator in the office or alternative safe location while waiting to be picked up or assisted further. An incident report will be completed and signed by the parent as well as reported to our childcare licenser if the incident requires emergency services, hospitalization, or medical treatment within 24 hours of the incident.

Food Allergies & Allergic Reactions: Prevention and Response Plan

Prevention & Preparedness

- **Allergy Information:** Collect written allergy information from parents at enrollment and update at least annually or when changes occur. Include allergens, typical symptoms, and emergency instructions.
- **Individual Action Plans:** Work with parents to maintain an allergy action plan based on medical guidance. Ensure required medications (e.g., epinephrine auto-injectors) and signed authorization forms are on file.
- **Staff Training:** All staff must know children's allergies, recognize symptoms, and understand each child's action plan. All staff complete in person CPR/Pediatric First Aid that is annually reviewed and semi-annually recertified.
- **Medication Access:** Store epinephrine auto-injectors securely, out of children's reach, but quickly accessible to staff. Staff must know their locations and how to use them.
- **Safe Environment:** Follow handwashing procedures and seat children from others with allergy inducing foods, prevent sharing of foods, and limiting exposure to allergies.

Recognizing Allergic Reactions: Watch for symptoms involving -

- **Stomach:** vomiting, nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhea
- **Breathing:** wheezing, coughing, difficulty breathing, throat or chest tightness
- **Skin:** hives, itching, redness

- **Other:** swelling of lips/tongue/throat, difficulty swallowing, dizziness, anxiety, fatigue
- **Anaphylaxis (Emergency):** trouble breathing, signs of shock, confusion, loss of consciousness

Responding to Allergic Reactions

Mild to Moderate Reaction: Follow the child’s action plan and monitor closely.

Severe Reaction / Anaphylaxis:

1. Administer epinephrine immediately as directed (outer thigh).
2. Call **911** and report a severe allergic reaction.
3. Lay the child down unless vomiting or having breathing difficulty.
4. Administer a second dose of epinephrine if symptoms persist and the action plan allows.
5. Contact parents/emergency contacts.
6. Ensure the child is transported to the hospital with medical information and release forms.

All allergic reactions must be taken seriously and responded to promptly

Attendance

Please notify your child’s teacher ahead of time if you know that your child will be late or absent for any reason. For illnesses and unforeseen tardiness or absences, please notify us as soon as you can. You can send all notifications to your child’s teachers via a Brightwheel message. Per Montana Child Care Licensing Requirements, we must have a reason for a child’s absence before they may return to LRLC. If LRLC does not hear from a family about their child’s absence, a teacher or administrator will check in and require a reply before the child can return. There is no refund for days missed due to illness or for other reasons.

Door Access & Security

Each enrolled guardian is provided a unique door code to ensure secure access to the center during operating hours. This code is linked to your name and contact information. For the safety of all children, **do not share your code with anyone.** If your code is ever compromised, notify the Center Director immediately so a new code can be issued.

Individuals listed on your emergency contact sheet who are approved pick ups may ring the doorbell for access and may be asked to show a valid ID. Do not open the door for anyone else, even if you recognize them, as we cannot confirm their family arrangements.

Signing In and Out: Each child at LRLC must be signed in and out by his/her parent or authorized representative on each day of attendance. Checking in or out is a Two-Step Process:

1. Use Brightwheel to check in your child.
2. Enter the classroom with your child to greet or dismiss them with their teacher.

This ensures accurate attendance, correct billing, and—most importantly—the safety of your child in case of an emergency. The LRLC Staff will provide a Brightwheel app login to allow for electronic checking in/out as well as communication with staff. **Full signatures are required.** Children must be escorted to their classroom and their presence acknowledged by a staff person before the parent leaves for the day.

This process prevents miscommunication and ensures staff always know your child's location.

Release of Children to Adults: No child will be released to a person other than a parent or guardian without the written permission of the parent or guardian as indicated on the Emergency Card. If the parent/guardian desires his/her child be released to another person not indicated on the Emergency Card, a BrightWheel message may be accepted indicating the name of the person the child is to be released to, the time when the child is to be released and the purpose of the release. The individual may be required to provide proof of identity when arriving at the Center.

LRLC will only release children to persons over 16 years of age.

Notification of Changes to Emergency Information: In order to be able to contact parents in case of an emergency, it is essential that LRLC maintain current and accurate information on each child. This requirement includes the child's address, home and work phone numbers including extensions for parents, work locations, immunization information, and the names of those adults authorized to remove the child from the Center. It is the *parent's* responsibility to notify the center of any changes to their child's enrollment packet.

Failure to comply with this expectation places children, parents, and staff in jeopardy. The unexpected always happens! We need to be able to contact parents quickly when it does.

Safe Sleep Policy/Practices

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected death of a seemingly healthy baby for whom no cause of death can be determined based on an autopsy, an investigation of the place where the infant died, and a review of the infant's medical history.

We believe that a safe sleep environment for infants helps lower the chances of an infant dying from SIDS, and that parents and childcare providers can work together to provide a safe sleep environment. Childcare providers caring for infants 12 months of age or younger, are required to implement a safe sleep policy, share the safe sleep policy with parents/guardians, and participate in Infant-Toddler Safe Sleep and SIDS Risk Reduction in Child Care training. LRLC will implement the following safe sleep practices.

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- All childcare staff caring for infants and childcare staff that may potentially care for infants will receive training on how to implement our infant Safe Sleep Policy.
- Infants will always be placed on their **backs to sleep**, unless there is a signed *Alternate Sleep Position Waiver*- Health Care Professional Recommendation in the infant's file. A waiver notice will be posted at the infant's crib. Waivers will be retained in the children's record while they are enrolled.
- When babies can easily turn over from the back to the stomach, they will be placed to sleep on their backs and then allowed to adopt the sleep position they prefer. This is in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations. Childcare staff can further discuss with parents how to address circumstances when the baby turns onto their stomach or side.
- Sleeping infants will be visually checked at all times by assigned staff. The sleep information will be recorded on Brightwheel. We will be especially alert to monitor a sleeping infant during the first weeks the infant is in childcare. We will check the infant for:
 - Normal skin color
 - Normal breathing by watching the rise and fall of the chest
 - His or her level of sleep
 - Signs of overheating: flushed skin color, increase in body temperature (touch the skin), and restlessness
- Staff will reduce the risk of overheating by not over-dressing.
- All parents/guardians of infants cared for in the facility will receive a written copy of our Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy before enrollment, will review the policy with staff, and sign a statement saying they received and reviewed the policy. All staff members will receive and sign this policy as well, regardless of which classroom they work in.
- The temperature in the room where the infant(s) sleep will be kept between 68-75°F and monitored by the thermometer kept in the infant sleeping room.

- To promote healthy development, awake infants will be given supervised “tummy time” for exercise and for play.
- Infants' heads will not be covered with blankets or bedding. Infants' cribs will not be covered with blankets or bedding. We may use a sleep sack instead of a blanket following “childcare licensing approved sleep sacks” as posted in the infant crib room cabinet.
- No loose bedding, pillows, bumper pads, etc. will be used in cribs.
- Toys and stuffed animals will be removed from the crib when the infant is sleeping.
- Pacifiers will be allowed in infants’ cribs while they sleep. When the pacifier falls out of the sleeping infant’s mouth, it will not be reinserted into the infant’s mouth. A pacifier is the only object we will allow in a crib.
- A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet will be used.
- Each infant will sleep in his or her own crib. Only one infant will be in a crib at a time, unless we are evacuating infants in an emergency.
- No smoking is permitted on the premises.

Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS): Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is a serious brain injury that occurs when an infant or toddler is shaken forcefully, causing serious brain injury. This form of abuse can lead to lifelong injuries and even death. We at Little Rangers Learning Center believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families.

Staff are trained to recognize symptoms of SBS:

Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high-pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

Responding to: If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will

Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.

Call the parents/guardians.

If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

Reporting: “The director, assistant director or any staff member of the childcare facility who has reason to suspect that any child is or has been abused or neglected is required to personally report the matter promptly to the department child abuse hotline at 1-800-820-5437. The childcare provider or staff

member shall make the report within 24 hours of receiving information concerning suspected child abuse or neglect.” (37.95.171)

Prevention strategies in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child:

Staff first determine if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies:

- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child.
- Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy.
- Take the child for a ride in a stroller.
- Turn on music or white noise.
- Allows for staffs who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children.
- Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

- Shaking or jerking a child
- Tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat
- Pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture

Communication (Staff): Within 30 days of adopting this policy, the childcare facility shall review the policy with all staff who provide care for children up to five years of age. All current staff members and newly hired staff will be trained in SBS/AHT before providing care for children up to five years of age. Staff will sign an acknowledgement form that includes the individual's name, the date the center's policy was given and explained to the individual, the individual's signature, and the date the individual signed the acknowledgment. The childcare facility shall keep the SBS/AHT staff acknowledgement form in the staff member's file.

Communication (Parents/Guardians): Within 30 days of adopting this policy, the childcare facility shall review the policy with parents/guardians of currently enrolled children up to five years of age. A copy of the policy will be given and explained to the parents/guardians of newly enrolled children up to five years of age on or before the first day the child receives care at the facility. Parents/guardians will sign an acknowledgement form that includes the child's name, date the child first attended the facility, date the operator's policy was given and explained to the parent, parent's name, parent's signature, and the date the parent signed the acknowledgement. The childcare facility shall keep the SBS/AHT parent acknowledgement form in the child's file.

Child Abuse Reporting Requirement: LRLC takes the safety of our children very seriously. One of our responsibilities is the immediate reporting of any suspected case of child abuse and neglect. As required

by law, any suspected case of child abuse or neglect will be reported to the Department of Human Services.

Mandatory Abuse and Neglect Reporting: All of LRLC's staff are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. "The director, assistant director or any staff member of the childcare facility who has reason to suspect that any child is or has been abused or neglected is required to personally report the matter promptly to the department child abuse hotline at 1-800-820-5437. The childcare provider or staff member shall make the report within 24 hours of receiving information concerning suspected child abuse or neglect." (37.95.171)

It's our mission to ensure all children in our center are safe and well cared for, not only while they are at our center, but at all times. Montana law requires everyone who works directly with children to report suspicions or evidence of child neglect or abuse to local law enforcement. Those who fail to report can be held accountable under the law. The law prohibits interference with an individual's attempt to report child abuse or neglect. Our school will offer full cooperation during the investigation of the reported incident.

- Should a staff member have reason to suspect abuse, they will contact Little Rangers Learning Center's Director and follow up with an immediate phone call to Gallatin County Human Services. If an administrative staff member is unavailable, staff members have the authority to make the call and to prepare a written report of the account.
- Little Rangers Learning Center will not hire a person who has been convicted of abuse of any type, and all staff undergoes a fingerprint and criminal background check before employment begins.
- All staff members are responsible for protecting all children from abuse from any child or staff member. All staff members are required to report any suspected cases of abuse, whether it is suspected at Little Rangers or away from Little Rangers.
- All LRLC staff receive training in recognizing and responding to child maltreatment, including abuse and neglect.
- LRLC strictly prohibits the mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of any child in the program by any staff member. Any employee found in violation of the abuse and neglect policies shall be immediately terminated. If the charges are not upheld, the Center Director or Executive Director will determine eligibility for reinstatement.

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN - HEALTH, SAFETY & NUTRITION PRACTICES FOR ADULTS

Emergency & Disaster Preparedness: The secret to keeping a cool head in a disaster is planning, preparation and practice. LRLC implements the following fire drill plan on a monthly basis.

We make every effort to be prepared for potential emergencies. LRLC has an emergency response plan for fire, shelter in place, or if a lockdown becomes necessary. This plan is updated annually and submitted to our state licenser. These plans are reviewed annually with the staff. Additional precautions we take in the event of an emergency are:

Emergency phone numbers are posted by all phones. Each classroom has an emergency “To-Go” bag with snacks, water, and emergency contact information for all students and staff.

- We conduct 10 Emergency Drills annually, including 8 fire drills.
- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room.
- Annual inspections by the Hebgen Basin Fire Chief.
- If an emergency requires evacuation, we’ll notify you as soon as the children have been relocated to a safe area via phone call to be reunited with your child.
- The Center has a 72-hour shelter in place kit, which contains food, water, and flashlights for longer emergency situations and is checked annually.

A shelter in place plan as well as evacuation procedures are described below:

Evacuation Procedures (Fire, Active Threat, Hazard Requiring Exit):

1. Initiating Emergency Response:
Any staff member discovering an emergency will immediately sound the alarm and notify Fire, Police, or Emergency Services.
2. Classroom Responsibilities; Teachers will:
 - Gather children immediately
 - Bring the emergency backpack, classroom sign-in sheet, and children’s coats/boots if safe to do so
 - Evacuate calmly and quickly to the designated evacuation site
3. Evacuation Location: Children and staff will relocate to the designated safe evacuation site, located furthest from the building, or to the Povah Center or Town Offices as directed by First Responders.
4. Accountability: Upon arrival, teachers will conduct a headcount using sign-in sheets. The Director will sweep bathrooms and hallways before exiting and will verify that all children and staff are accounted for once outside.
5. Coordination & Documentation: The Director will serve as the primary point of contact with First Responders, time drills, and complete all required Child Care Safety Records.

6. Reentry: Staff and children will not reenter the building until cleared by Fire or Emergency Officials.

Shelter-in-Place Procedures: *(Severe Weather, External Threat, or Unsafe Outdoor Conditions)*

- The designated shelter-in-place location is the Moose Toddler Room (Green Door - Crib Room).
- Teachers will bring children into the room, close and secure doors, maintain calm, and keep children supervised at all times.
- Attendance will be verified, and emergency supplies will be used as needed.
- The Director will maintain communication with First Responders and staff via phone or text.

Parent Notification:

- Parents will be notified of emergency situations as soon as it is safe to do so via phone call, text, or approved communication system.
- Updates will include the nature of the emergency, child status, and reunification instructions.

Child–Parent Reunification:

- Parents will gather at the Povah Center or Town Offices, as directed by Police or First Responders.
- Children will only be released to authorized adults with proper identification and approval from the Teacher, Director, or Law Enforcement.
- Teachers will document the name of the adult picking up each child.
- Parents may remain with their child until the ALL CLEAR is issued.

Staff Expectations:

- Teachers must remain with their assigned children at all times.
- All staff cell phones must remain on and accessible during emergencies.
- The Director will serve as the communication liaison between staff and First Responders and will remain with staff and children until the FINAL ALL CLEAR.

Planning for Children's individual needs: Little Rangers will hold emergency contact forms for each child in our go bags for emergency disaster planning, including documented allergies, special medical needs, and individualized health care or medication plans for children with chronic conditions. When medication administration is required, the center will ensure that all necessary medical documentation is on file, including current medication authorizations, dosing instructions, and prescriptions when applicable. Emergency contact information and the name of the child's health care provider will be readily accessible to staff to ensure timely and appropriate care during emergencies or disaster situations.

Special Dietary Needs: If a child has any special dietary needs or allergies, this must be disclosed in the enrollment paperwork. Food brought from home for special dietary purposes must be carefully labeled with the child's name. From time to time, we have special snacks or treats provided by LRLC or other families and will need to know all children's food restrictions. Please see "Food Allergies & Allergic Reactions: Prevention and Response Plan" in this handbook.

Use of Cameras in Our Classrooms: As stated above, keeping children safe is LRLC's highest priority. We also recognize the need to keep parents assured that their children are safe and to provide safety for our staff. Installation of classroom cameras provides a proactive layer of protection to children and adults within our environment. Please speak to the Director about any concerns you may have regarding this practice.

Nutrition:

The LRLC food program is offered on a year-to-year basis and is dependent on available funding. Because we maintain low tuition rates, we are only able to provide morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) snacks when sufficient funding is secured.

Our food program is funded through local donations, which must be large enough to cover the entire school year (September through August). To support this effort, parents are required to complete a CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) application, which helps LRLC receive reimbursement for eligible meals.

In any year that we are unable to secure funding, parents will be responsible for providing their child's morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Keep the following points in mind when planning for nutritional needs.

Meals and snacks are an important part of the day at LRLC. The routines we establish around meals and snacks help ensure the health and safety of children as well as support children in developing healthy relationships with food. Families are expected to pack their child's lunch and snacks daily. Lunch and snacks should be prepared and ready to reheat and/or eat during the children's scheduled mealtimes. Food to be reheated should be in a microwavable container and labeled with the child's name. Lunch and Snacks must include the following food components:

- fruit, vegetable, or 100% fruit or vegetable alternative
- bread or bread alternative

- milk or dairy, or dairy alternative
- protein

Please consider not packing food with a high sugar content, junk food, juice boxes, or candy.

Special Dietary Needs: If your child has any special dietary needs or allergies, this must be disclosed in the enrollment paperwork. Food brought from home for special dietary purposes must be carefully labeled with the child's name. From time to time, we have special snacks or treats provided by LRLC or other families and will need to know all children's food restrictions.

- Make sure that lunch boxes are easy for the children to manipulate themselves.
- If the child does not eat his/her meal, it will be repacked into the original containers to be sent home.
- Be sure your child eats a good meal before coming to school.
- Refrigerator space is not available for lunchboxes- please make sure anything that needs to be kept cold is packed with an ice pack.

If the school year is funded appropriately for a food program, we provide milk at AM Snack for all children. Children ages one to two receive whole milk and children two and over receive 1% or 2% milk. If your child has a milk allergy or does not yet drink cow's milk, you are responsible for notifying the center and providing an appropriate substitute.

Children who use bottles need to bring one bottle and nipple per feeding. Formula should be brought premixed in the bottle. Bottles should be labeled with the child's name, the date, and the contents.

Birthdays celebrated at LRLC are special, so snacks for your child's birthday are welcome. The teachers can provide many examples of healthy birthday treats.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

CLASSROOM ROUTINES

Arrival and Departure: Hours of Operation: LRLC is open from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with the exception of limited extended hours from 7:30am - 5:00pm.

Pick-Up Time: Pick-up begins at **3:30 PM**, and all students and parents must exit the building by **4:00 PM** for regular opening hours or **5:15PM** for extended hours. It is important to respect this closing time so staff can properly clean, prepare for the next day, and conclude their workday on schedule.

Late Arrivals/Pick-Ups: If you anticipate being late, please contact the Center as soon as possible and identify an authorized representative for pick-up. Families remaining in the building past 4:00 PM will incur **late charges**, unless they are attending a pre-scheduled meeting. These fees go directly toward covering staff overtime required to remain on site after hours.

Teacher and Family Communication: Each morning, your child will be warmly greeted by their teacher, and at pick-up, the teacher will connect with you and say good-bye to your child. This daily routine helps your child transition smoothly, build security, and anticipate what to expect tomorrow. Pick-up and drop-off times are also a great opportunity for brief updates about your child's learning or day. For longer conversations or a conversation outside of business hours, please schedule a conference with staff so we can give you the time and attention needed. All other communication between teachers and parents during business hours must be through Brightwheel. Please contact the center director if there are any issues with Brightwheel preventing communication.

Potty Accidents: All potty accidents will be treated with the utmost respect for the child. You are required to have a clean set of clothes, labeled with your child's name, in their cubby. If a child wets themselves or has a bowel movement, a teacher will contact a parent to let them know. Upon an accident occurring, we will help your child into fresh clothes, and the soiled clothing will be put into a plastic bag for cleaning at home. Please remember to return an extra set of clean clothes the next day. If your child is having frequent accidents at home due to an illness or other circumstances, please notify the school staff.

Clothing and Personal Belongings: We are a childcare facility and we use paint, markers, eat messy foods, and play outside daily if the weather permits. While we do our best to keep messes to a minimum, accidents happen. Please do not send your child in clothes that are special or sentimental, as they can get ruined. We spend time outside daily. Please be sure to send the appropriate outdoor clothing for the season. During the winter months be sure to send your child to school with a coat, boots, snow pants, hat, and gloves.

Please send your child with a complete change of clothing inside a Ziploc bag labeled with his or her name to keep at school in case of accidents or spills. (Please include a shirt, pants, underwear, and socks.)

Please send your child with a sheet and blanket for their naptime cot. Twos and Threes cots fit a crib or twin sheet while PreK cots need a twin sheet. These naptime items will be sent home weekly for washing. If your child is still in a crib, an appropriate fitted sheet will be provided by the center.

Comfort items such as a blanket or stuffed animal may accompany your child to school for use at nap or quiet time. All other toys or personal belongings should remain at home unless otherwise noted by LRLC staff. We cannot be responsible for lost, broken, or stolen toys.

Field Trips: Special trips to places of interest within walking distance are frequently offered. The center provides experiences for children to learn about the world in which they live including opportunities for field trips to places of interest in the community and/or presentations by family and other community people to further expand the exposure and experiences of the children. Early childhood teachers are required to secure a release from parents before children are taken on field trips. The OUTDOOR ACTIVITY AUTHORIZATION FORM in your enrollment packet includes a permission slip for walks or stroller rides within 1 mile of the center. Any field trips hosted by LRLC outside of the mile radius with secured transportation is rare but will be communicated with families ahead of time and will have a separate permission slip specific to that trip.

Custody Issues: With regards to separated or divorced parents:

- A parent without custody may have access to the child with written permission of the custodial parent.
- Where applicable, a court order should always be on file at the center. Without this legal document, LRLC cannot prevent the non-custodial parent from removing the child from the center.
- Inform the LRLC staff of the child's home situation. There may be an impact on your child's behavior within the classroom.

Behavior Management: One of the most important parts of the early childhood years is learning the skills needed to deal with conflicts and develop healthy relationships. This process involves emotional intelligence and requires the following skills.

- Identifying and labeling one's feelings
- Recognizing emotions in others
- Responding appropriately to emotions

All these developmental skills increase as the child gets older. Babies don't have the cognitive ability to be aware of another infant's feelings, but preschoolers can be very empathetic. Toddlers are very impulsive, but older children can control their impulses. The development of language is key in this journey.

Positive Guidance: Our approach to behavior management rests on a positive, guidance approach that reinforces positive behaviors and helps children build the social skills needed to be successful in later life. Children will not be punished or humiliated at this Center. These kinds of practices lead to diminished self-esteem, loss of enjoyment in learning, and negative feelings towards others.

Here at LRLC, we have three overall guiding principles for positive guidance.

1. Be Safe
2. Be Kind
3. Be a Team Player

The staff will use the following techniques to help children to be successful in creating a positive, caring learning environment:

- Encouraging the child to use language when having a disagreement with another child. “Use your words, not your hands”
- Helping children settle their own disputes rather than relying on an adult for resolution.
- Teacher modeling of expected behaviors
- Setting clear limits
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors
- Allowing a child to leave the group to calm down and return when ready
- Talking with children individually about their behaviors
- Keeping parents in the loop about any behavioral concerns
- Considering the cause of the behavior rather than just looking at the behavior out of context. “Every behavior sends a message.”
- Intervene before a situation becomes a problem.
- Praising success – even small ones
- Enforcing consequences for unacceptable, harmful behavior
- Keeping a classroom behavior log to collect data about the problem behavior

LRLC has identified three unacceptable behaviors which require intervention:

1. Children may not inflict harm on themselves, other children, or adults in their environment.
2. Children may not be disrespectful of the center’s materials.

3. Children may not threaten other students or teachers.

Most of the time, a combination of the above strategies addresses most problems successfully. Children learn the skills needed to develop and sustain friendships with other children and trusted adults.

Expulsion and Suspension Policy: When we're not successful, the staff will meet with parents to develop a more specific behavioral plan. If the child's behavior continuously takes away from the long-term care and safety of others, the child may be required to leave the center.

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Removal from LRLC: If a situation arises where the LRLC director and teachers feel that they can no longer provide adequate or appropriate care for a child or if a child is continually hurting him/herself or others, the family may be asked to leave the center. Before such action is taken, the director and teachers will work in conjunction with the parents/family of the child to create an action plan to remedy the situation. Only if said plan does not work and other options have been exhausted will the family be asked to leave, at the discretion of the Director and Board of Directors.

FAMILY CODE OF CONDUCT

LRLC is committed to being a welcoming, safe, and happy place to work, learn, and grow! We believe that children at our center are most successful when there is an ongoing positive relationship between families and caregivers. We are dedicated to practicing listening, mutual respect, and open communication to avoid misunderstandings. With our core values at the forefront and to ensure mutual respect and understanding between families, volunteers, and visitors who engage in the LRLC community is maintained, LRLC has adopted these policies and standards of conduct. LRLC requires that parents of enrolled children behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect at all times. It's our goal to provide the most appropriate and secure environment for children that encourages growth, learning, and development. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of employees and board members at LRLC, it is also the responsibility of each parent or adult who enters the center. We are a close, family-like community here at LRLC, and we are aware that staff and parents may be friends outside of the classroom setting. It is important for any personal conflicts or disagreements to be kept outside of the center. LRLC shall always be a calm and positive place for children. Any concerns a parent may have regarding a member of staff will be listened to outside of the classroom and acted upon when needed. However, it is both the parents' and the staff members' responsibility to ensure that personal disagreements and interpersonal issues are kept outside of the classroom setting.

Communication: All communication between teachers and parents during business hours must be through Brightwheel. No parent or adult shall be permitted to curse or use any other inappropriate or disrespectful language at Little Rangers Learning Center. Such language will NOT be tolerated in the

presence of the children, other families, or staff at the center or while representing LRLC. Threats, aggressive confrontation, and disrespect of any kind toward LRLC staff, board members, other families, or children will NOT be tolerated. While it is understood that all parents may not agree with the staff of LRLC or the parents of other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. This includes expressing concerns respectfully and directly with center staff.

Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited. The following list includes some examples of inappropriate behavior:

- Disrespectful communication directed towards staff in person, through Brightwheel and/or posted in public forums including social media platforms

- Excessive complaining and/or disrespectful communication regarding LRLC in the community, especially when the concerns have not been brought to LRLC staff's attention Contacting staff or community members in a manner that undermines LRLC policies and protocol

- Shouting, raising of voices, or any unwanted physical contact with a member of staff
- Arriving at LRLC under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or prohibited substances

Parents must be responsible and in control of their own behavior at all times. If it is deemed that a parent is acting in an inappropriate manner with a staff member, child, other families, or community members, the following steps will be taken:

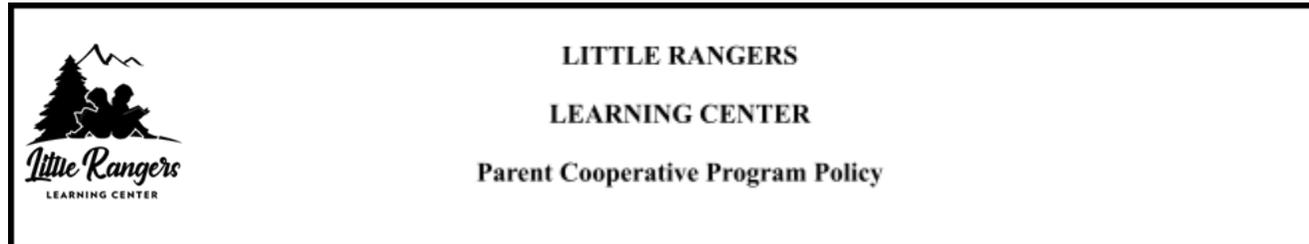
Step 1- A meeting with the parent and the Center Director will be held to find a resolution.

Step 2- A meeting with the Center Director and parents, along with staff and board members as necessary, will be held to find a resolution.

Step 3- If no resolution has been found, and the parent continues to act in a manner that is inappropriate, the decision may be made to discontinue enrollment for that family. Depending on the nature and severity of the issue, LRLC reserves the right to discontinue a family's enrollment at any of the above stages.

With these policies, we hope to provide your child and family with a comfortable and safe environment as we help set the stage for a life full of learning ahead. We can only truly provide this with the help of each parent and adult who walks into our center. LRLC promises to continue working in partnership with families to make learning fun!

Appendix A: Parent Cooperative Program



Purpose:

Little Rangers Learning Center (LRLC) is committed to providing affordable, quality care to our community and is proud to offer some of the lowest tuition rates in the state of Montana, compared to the state average for center-based care. 100% of tuition funds go to your teacher's paycheck. LRLC's remaining expenses come from outside sources – grants, local contributions, endowment allowance, or government funding. Parent involvement is an important component of this program based on the belief that the best environment for children exists when there is a close family-child care facility relationship. Research shows that children with involved parents make substantially greater developmental gains than children whose parents don't participate.

You are the expert on your child and the most influential factor affecting the success of LRLC. We welcome your comments, suggestions and concerns. Throughout the year, you will hear about volunteer opportunities, and you can also speak with the staff or the board to inquire about opportunities for getting involved. We need your help and encourage families to visit the classroom, when feasible, to share information about their work and their home life, for instance parents might offer a special food or song from their culture, assist with a class project, read to children, or share how babies are carried in their culture. When teachers, caregivers, and administrators encourage family involvement, children notice and feel a sense of security. LRLC asks every family to contribute in ways that strengthen our classrooms, support our events, and ensure LRLC's future.

Your time, skills, and donations help keep LRLC vibrant and well-resourced. This multi-level participation in the school enables parents to share in their child's school experience, ensures a quality program through the combined efforts and talents of the entire school community and provides an opportunity to share and grow in our parenting roles in an atmosphere of mutual support. Further, it provides an environment where children learn cooperation from the example of their parents and teachers working closely together. The experiences gained in school participation also aid parents in acquiring skills necessary to become effective advocates for their child's future educational experiences and opportunities.

Annual Contribution Requirement

Each family is asked to complete **20 Contribution hours** per school year. This divides into ~1.7 hrs./mo. and the yearly amount is pro-rated for families who enroll mid-year.

- **1 Hour of Volunteering = 1 Hour**
- **\$10 Value of Donated Goods = 1 Hour**

Families may choose any combination of time and supplies to meet their annual hours.

Ways to Earn Contribution Hours

1. Classroom Support

- Show appreciation for your teacher with a kind note or a gift
- Assist in classroom activities (reading, projects, organizing)
- Prepare materials at home (cutting, laminating, assembling projects)
- Provide classroom supplies from teacher wish lists

2. Event Support

- Set-up/clean-up for family events
- Provide baked goods, snacks, or beverages for events
- Run a booth, game, or activity at a fundraiser

3. Facility and Operations Support

- Assist with small maintenance or cleaning projects
- Donate bottled water, paper products, or cleaning supplies
- Prepare or provide an AM or PM snack

4. Committee Involvement

- Join a board committee for a short-term project (Finance, Fund Development/Marketing, Teacher/Parent/Board Relations, Operations, Nutrition) – hours vary based on time commitment; typically, 3–5 hours per project period. Granted by the board member.
-

Tracking Contributions

- Teachers and the director will provide ways to contribute monthly by their door. Families will log hours and donations using a **Parent Contribution Form** available at the front desk or submit here: [Parent Contribution Submission - Google Forms](#).
 - LRLC will provide quarterly updates on your points earned and remaining.
 - Families exceeding their requirements are always welcome to contribute more—every extra bit helps!
 - Classrooms with the most participation for the month will host a classroom party for parents and students
-

Alternative Option

We encourage every family to actively participate in our center, as your involvement helps us provide the highest quality care for all children. We also understand that your time is valuable and that rising costs affect everyone. For this reason, we have demonstrated our commitment to families by keeping tuition rates reasonable for years.

In return, we ask for your support. Each family is expected to contribute at least **20 hours** of participation throughout the school year (ending in August) or during their enrollment period. Families who are unable to meet this requirement will be charged a **\$250 annual fee**. This fee will be prorated based on the number of hours earned.

At LRLC, we are committed to offering many different opportunities for families to contribute, making it easier for everyone to be part of our community. Thank you for helping us grow.

Together, we can keep LRLC affordable, well-resourced, and thriving for years to come—thank you for being part of our community!

APPENDIX B: School Year Calendar

2025-2026 Little Rangers LC Calendar Calendarpedia Your source for calendars

August 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	V	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	PD	PD	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	V	V	V	V	V	29
30						

December 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	V	V	V	V	V	27
28	V	V	V			

January 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				V	V	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	PD	PD	28

March 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	V	V				

April 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			V	V	V	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	V	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	PD	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	V	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Closure Days 2025/26

10/17-10/18 Professional Development
 11/24-11/28 Thanksgiving Break
 12/22-1/3 Winter Break

2/26-2/27 Professional Development
 3/30-4/3 Spring Break
 6/19 Professional Development
 Juneteenth

Other Holiday Closures:

9/1/2025 Labor Day
 5/25/2026 Memorial Day
 7/3/2026 Independence Day (obs.)

Data provided 'as is' without warranty

FAMILY HANDBOOK: <https://littlerangerslearningcenter.org/parent-handbook>

PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - SIGNATURE PAGE

After reading the Parent Handbook, please sign the appropriate lines below and return the form.

We, the parent(s)/guardians of _____ have read and understand the contents of the Parent Handbook. We agree to follow the policies outlined in the Parent Handbook. We understand that Little Rangers Learning Center reserves the right to amend policies and procedures when necessary, and that we will abide by changes. Any changes made to the Handbook will be distributed by Little Rangers Learning Center. The Parent Handbook is not an enrollment contract.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____
Printed Name _____
Date _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____
Printed Name _____
Date _____

Thank you for committing to uphold all LRLC policies and standards for the school year!