



LITTLE RANGERS LEARNING CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK

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 operation’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.

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 by the beginning of 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)

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.

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

Closure Dates/Holidays:

- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and following Friday
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (and leading/trailing weekdays)
- New Year's Day
- 2 Professional Development Days (TBD)

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 & Toddlers	4:1
2/3 year olds	8:1
3/4 year olds	8:1
4/5 year olds	10:1

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

Facility Qualifications: The Little Rangers Learning Center (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 & 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.

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 & students, ensuring compliance with all licensing requirements, and day-to-day running 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.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

Little Rangers Learning Center 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 two 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.

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:

Note: 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.

Times may vary due to operating hours.

8:00 – 8:30	Children & Families Arrive
8:00 – 8:30	Free Play/ interest areas Diaper Changing Cleaning Up
8:30 – 9:00	A M Snack & hand washing
9:00 – 9:35	Literacy (books, songs & finger plays) individually or as a group
9:35 – 10:45	Outside walk (weather permitting) or Free Play in inclement weather; free play and or exploration of the environment
10:45 – 11:30	Diaper changing /Getting ready for lunch
12:00 – 3:00	Naptime followed by diaper changing when awake
3:00 – 3:30	PM snack and handwashing

3:30 – 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
 Center closes

Preschool Daily Schedule (2-4 year olds)

Times may vary due to operating hours.

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 & Families Arrive Free Play/ interest areas open Diaper Changing/Toileting Cleaning Up
8:30	Breakfast
9:00 – 10:30	Outside playground time (weather permitting) or Free Play in inclement weather
10:45 – 11:30	Diaper changing /toileting Free play inside/interest areas open
11:30 – 12:15	Hand washing & lunch
12:15 – 3:00	Quiet Time/Rest Time/ Book Time Naptime followed by diaper changing/toileting when awake
3:00 -3:30	PM snack and handwashing
3:30 – 4:00	Free Play/interest areas open Outside if weather permits Last diaper change/toileting of the day Quiet time with books or other quiet activities Getting ready to go home, transition to parents Center Closes

Daily Activity Schedule (4 to 5 year olds – Prekindergarten)

Times may vary due to operating hours.

Daily interest centers will include the following curriculum areas:

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

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

8:00 – 8:30	Children & Families Arrive (Free Play/ interest areas open)
8:30 – 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 – 9:30	CIRCLE TIME
9:30 – 11:30	Outside Time if weather permits Free play – interest areas open in inclement weather Toileting as needed
11:30 – 11:45	Handwashing & lunch
12:30 – 1:00	Quiet book time
1:00 – 2:30	Naptime followed by toileting when awake
2:30 – 3:00	Quiet table activities until everyone is awake
3:00 – 3:30	PM snack and handwashing
3:30 – 4:00	Free Play/interest areas open; outside open if weather permits Getting ready to go home, transition to parents 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 (Bears)- age 0-1
2. Toddlers (Buffalo)- age 1-2
3. Twos (Otters)- age 2-3
4. Threes (Foxes)- age 3-4
5. PreK (Wolves)- age 4-5

ENROLLMENT

Admission Requirements: The following documentation must be completed before services can be provided.

- Emergency Contact & Parental Consent

- Registration Agreement
- Authorization Form for Over the Counter (OTC) Medication
- Outdoor Activity Authorization Form
- Pediatric Health Statement
- 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.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

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

Each child will also receive 2 weeks of vacation charged at half their rate of tuition per school year (September-august). These 2 weeks may only be used for consecutive days and must be approved by the director at least 2 weeks ahead of time.

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

Payment of Tuition: Parents can pay tuition by cash or check or by credit card via 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 \$10.00 per week fee is charged for full time/part time tuition paid after the identified due date. Non-payment of tuition may result in cessation of childcare services.

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 \$40.00 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.

HEALTH, SAFETY & NUTRITION

Immunizations: LRLC requires that all children be fully immunized as recommended for the child's age. This requirement includes immunizations against, measles, mumps, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, and Hemophilus influenza type B. Documentation of immunization status consists of a completed Montana certificate of immunization form (HPS – 101), including the date of birth, the name of each vaccine provided and the month, day, and year of each vaccination.

As of June 1, 2018, children will also need to have:

- Age-appropriate doses of Hepatitis B (Hep B) and pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV).
- One dose of varicella vaccine by 16 months rather than by 19 months of age.

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

Exclusion from the Program: If you receive a call or Brightwheel message because your child is ill, you will be required to come and get your child. One or more of the following symptoms will make this necessary: illness which prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or which results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide, unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability/persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs for the child as determined by the care provider.

- **Chickenpox:** Until all sores have dried and crusted. Exposure to chickenpox may occur 14-21 days before symptoms appear. Multiple small red bumps progress to watery blisters; open sores then become dry crusts. They usually start on the trunk or head.
- **Diarrhea:** Characterized by watery, frequent stools that cannot be contained by the diaper or by the child's ability to use the toilet. Regardless of cause, children may not be in the Center. If your child has two instances of diarrhea at the center, they must be picked up. Your child may be readmitted following a firm bowel movement or 24 hours diarrhea free.
- **Fever:** When a child is warm-to-the-touch and appears to be uncomfortable or registers a temperature exceeding 100.5 degrees (ear thermometer). An incident report must be signed by staff & parent at pickup. Child must be fever-free for 24 hours, without the aid of medication, before returning to the Center.
- **Head Lice:** Lice only live on human beings and can spread quickly, despite good health habits. Child may be readmitted after first treatment (when all lice and nits are gone) and will be checked upon re-admittance.
- **Mouth Sores:** Those accompanied by drooling, unless a health care provider determines that the child is noninfectious.

- **Pink Eye (Purulent):** Pink or red eye with white or yellow discharge, often matted eyelids after sleep, and including eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding eye. Child may not return to the Center until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been initiated.
- **Rash:** Especially with fever or behavior change, until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease. Those with impetigo may return 24 hours after treatment has been initiated. Ringworm requires that a child be receiving treatment before being readmitted. Those with scabies may return after treatment has been completed.
- **Strep:** Any streptococcal infection until 48 hours after initial antibiotic treatment
- **Vomiting:** One episode of vomiting in the previous 24 hours. Regardless of cause, child may not be in the Center. Child may be readmitted after vomiting ceases.
- **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease:** Blister-like rash that appears on a child's hands, feet, mouth, or buttocks. These blisters are usually preceded by a fever. Child may attend so long as the blisters are not open and weeping; child is contagious if the blisters are open and weeping and must be sent home. Child may return once blisters are no longer weeping.

Return to the Program after Exclusion: If the child returns to LRLC and the symptoms reoccur, he/she will be excluded for an additional 24 - hour period. A note from the child's physician may be required before re-admittance.

Dispensation of Medication: A Medication Authorization Form must be completed by the parent indicating the name of medication, how the medication is to be administered, the amount to be administered and the times when medication is to be administered. Prescription medications must be brought to Little Rangers Learning Center in the original prescription bottle with the child's name. Non-prescription medications must also be in the original container and clearly labeled with the child's name. Detailed information should be shared with the child's teacher and/or program director. Medication Authorization forms are available in each classroom and in the Center's office. No medications will be given to children if the proper form is not filled out, or the name on the prescription bottle does not match the child's.

Medication will be stored in a locked box or cabinet, away from children. Should medication need to be refrigerated, it will be stored away from food.

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.

Parents are responsible for taking home and disposing of expired medications themselves. No expired medications will be administered to children even with a signed form.

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 30-90 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.

First Aid: Our staff is certified in Adult and Infant CPR/First Aid. 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 called immediately, and a report form completed in the Accident Report Record. If emergency treatment is necessary, 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 child’s hands and face.
- **Choking:** Encourage 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 parents.
- **Hits head:** Ice the “egg”, keep 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.

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. 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. Sign-in sheets are located in each classroom as well. Children must be escorted to their classroom and their presence acknowledged by a staff person before the parent leaves for the day.

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 text 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. Little Rangers Learning Center will implement the following safe sleep practices.

Safe Sleep Practices

1. 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.
2. 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 records as long as they remain enrolled.
3. 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.
4. Sleeping infants will be visually checked daily, every 15-20 minutes, by assigned staff. The sleep information will be recorded on a Sleep Chart. The Sleep Chart will be kept on file for one month after the reporting month. We will be especially alert at monitoring a sleeping infant during the first weeks the infant is in childcare. We will check the infant for:

- a. Normal skin color
 - b. Normal breathing by watching the rise and fall of the chest
 - c. His or her level of sleep
 - d. Signs of overheating: flushed skin color, increase in body temperature (touch the skin), and restlessness
5. Staff will reduce the risk of overheating by not over-dressing or over-wrapping the infants.
 6. 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.
 7. 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.
 8. To promote healthy development, awake infants will be given supervised “tummy time” for exercise and for play.

Safe Sleep Environment

1. Infants' heads will not be covered with blankets or bedding. Infants' cribs will not be covered with blankets or bedding. Sleep sacks and similar safe sleep clothing may be used if the item does not restrict the child's arms.
2. No loose bedding, pillows, bumper pads, etc. will be used in cribs. We will tuck any infant blankets in at the foot of the crib and along the sides of the crib mattress. Blankets of any weight must be removed when infants 12 months of age or under are laid down for sleep.
3. Infants under 3 months of age may only be swaddled if medical documentation from a health care provider is on file at the facility.
4. Infants over 3 months of age must not be swaddled.
5. 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. The pacifier is the only object we will allow in a crib.
6. A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet will be used.

7. 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.
8. No smoking is permitted in the infant room or 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.

Symptoms of SBS include:

- Trouble suckling or swallowing
- Decreased appetite
- Trouble sleeping
- Increased fussing or irritability
- Vomiting

In severe cases, signs indicating a need for immediate medical attention will appear immediately:

- Difficulty breathing or turning blue
- Unresponsive or lethargic
- Convulsions or seizures
- Inability to vocalize or follow movement
- Inability to suck or swallow
- Loss of consciousness

All staff are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of SBS. They have put into place preventative measures to prevent SBS from happening such as taking a break or asking for help when overwhelmed by crying or using a distraction or a soothing technique to calm the child.

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.

1. The person discovering the fire or announcing the drill will immediately sound the alarm and inform the Fire/Police Department.
2. Teachers will gather their classroom's children into a group, grab the emergency backpack, the classroom's sign-in sheet and the children's coats/boots.
3. Evacuate the children as quickly as possible to an identified "safe spot" outside of the building and furthest away from the fire.
4. When the group arrives at their spot, count the children to ensure that all of the children signed in have arrived safely at the evacuation site.
5. While the teachers are evacuating the children, the director will sweep through the bathrooms and hallway to ensure that all children have been successfully evacuated before leaving the building.
6. When the Director arrives outside, she will account for the staff and ensure that all children are safe.
7. The director will time all drills and ensure that the Center completes the CHILD CARE SAFETY RECORD.
8. Staff and children may not return to the building until the fire department has ensured that the building is safe.
9. When all is well, notify parents of the emergency situation.

This plan is also appropriate for "Active Shooter" situations.

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.

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: LRLC will provide a light breakfast and an afternoon snack by participating in Montana's CACSP (Child Adult Care Food Program). Participation in the CACFP ensures a variety of nutritional foods are served to the children in our program.

Parents will be responsible for providing lunch. Keep the following points in mind when planning for nutritional needs.

- Pack an appropriate amount of healthy food (fruits, vegetables, cheese, whole wheat bread/crackers, 100% fruit juices, etc.) reflecting your child's preferences. Consult our staff for further snack/lunch suggestions.
- Make sure that lunch boxes are easy for the children to manipulate themselves.
- The healthy portion of the meal is eaten before treats.
- 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.
- Let us know if your child has special dietary needs.

Birthdays are celebrated at LRLC. so special 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, audiotape, 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 & Departure: LRLC opens at 8:00 AM and closes at 4:00PM. Please adhere to these hours as strictly as possible. If you will be arriving late, please contact the Center and identify an authorized representative for pick up. See Health, Safety & Nutrition section for additional information regarding the release of children to adults.

Please remember to sign your child(ren) in and out of the center daily to help confirm attendance, billing accuracy, and the safety of your child in the event of an emergency.

Your child will be greeted each day by his/her teacher. Likewise, she will make contact at pick up time and say good-bye. This process is critical to helping your child integrate comfortably into the classroom and begin to anticipate what will be happening tomorrow.

This is also an opportune time to have short communications with parents. If a longer conversation is needed, contact the staff to schedule a conference.

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, socks.)

Please send your child with a sheet and blanket for their naptime cot. Toddler and Preschool cots fit a crib or twin sheet while PreK cots need a twin sheet. These naptime items will be sent home weekly for washing.

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 Little Rangers Learning Center staff. We cannot be responsible for lost, broken, or stolen toys.

Food/Bottles: We will provide a morning snack consisting of two components plus milk and an afternoon snack consisting of two components. Parents are responsible for providing a lunch for their child. Please make sure to include an ice pack if there are items that need to stay cold as refrigerator space is only available for bottles in the infant and toddler rooms.

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

Field Trips: Special trips to places of interest within walking distance are frequently offered. Authorization to participate in these field trips has been included in the OUTDOOR ACTIVITY AUTHORIZATION FORM in your enrollment packet.

Closures: The monthly activity calendar will inform you of any upcoming closures. The Center will close twice a year for Teacher Professional Development Days, these will be on the school year calendar that is released in August of each year. If the Center will be closed, we will inform parents as soon as possible so that alternative childcare can be arranged.

Little Rangers Learning Center requires a minimum of 4 full day children to keep the center open. According to the Montana licensing regulations, the Director or Assistant Director must be on site during operating hours. If both are absent, the center will have to close.

Communication with a staff parent: If a situation arises where a teacher has the child of another staff member in their class and they need to communicate an issue with the staff-parent, the director must be included as a mediator. This is done to protect the interests of both parties in case any further issues arise during or because of the communication.

When to Involve the Director in Parent communications: If a situation arises which involves more than one child, please fill out an incident report for each child involved and inform the director before contacting parents so that the director is aware of the situation should any further conflict arise from said situation. If only one child is involved in an incident, the teacher should contact the parent first and then let the director know that there is an incident report to sign.

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.

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.

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.

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 Little Rangers, 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 & 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

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.

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.

Parent Conduct

Parents and families of Little Rangers Learning Center are held to a certain standard of behavior when in the building and when communicating with teachers and other staff. Swearing, threatening, and violent or aggressive behavior is not permitted.

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 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.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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.

Here are some ways that you can help:

- Visit the Center as often as you can. Observe classroom activities and get to know your child's friends and teachers.
- Participate in field trips and special events.
- Talk with your child about his/her day at school. "Did you build anything in the block area today? Are the dinosaurs still in the block area?"
- Show your child that you're excited about the new things that he/she is learning. Display his/her work or special project at home.
- Tell your child's teacher about your child's likes (special foods, games, interests, etc.)
- Share your ideas or concerns about the children's activities with the staff. Let them know what you like as well as what you don't like.
- If you have some time and talent to share (such as singing, playing an instrument, gardening, carpentry), please share with the children.
- Attending parent conferences, parent meetings, and parent education sessions.

- Provide items needed to run our center daily. These items may include arts & crafts materials used for projects and activities at LRLC, laundry soap, dishwashing detergent, disinfecting wipes, etc.
- Contributing time for repairs, weekly chores, or projects that you, as an involved parent can do, helps keep the cost of your child’s care at its minimum. Please check with staff members to find out what assistance may be needed.
- Actively participate in fundraising.

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 very much!