



**19433 TC Jester Blvd., Building C, Klein, TX 77379**

**281-547-8989**

**[www.LittleExplorersKids.com](http://www.LittleExplorersKids.com)**

# Family Handbook

## Little Explorers Academy Closed Holidays and Early Closures:

New Year's Eve, New Year's Day	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
President's Day – <i>Staff Training Day</i>	Good Friday
Memorial Day	Juneteenth – <i>Staff Training Day</i>
Independence Day	Labor Day
Columbus Day – <i>Staff Training Day</i>	Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day, Black Friday	Christmas Eve, Christmas Day

### Early Closures – 1:00 p.m.:

**Day Before Christmas Eve, Day Before New Year's Eve**

**Wednesday before Thanksgiving**

**A Texas State Licensed and Insured Childcare Preschool - #1687543**

# WELCOME

Dear Parents/Guardians:

## Welcome to Little Explorers Christian Academy a Private Premier Preschool.

We are pleased that you have enrolled your child in our Little Explorers Program. We want you to be a part of our center and your child's education. We ask that you look over this Family Handbook and then keep it at home for future reference.

Little Explorers Academy (LEA) has established several policies and procedures concerning program and classroom practices that set the standards for our private preschool. These guidelines have been developed to comply with state childcare licensing and for the safety and well-being of your child. We are an Accredited School with Texas Rising Star and exceed the state guidelines in our school. The policies and procedures described in this booklet are written to provide a clear description of what parents/guardians will expect of Little Explorers Academy and what Little Explorers Academy expects of parents/guardians. Our goal is to provide exemplary childcare services and academic excellence to your child(ren).

Little Explorers Academy is a Christian-Based Educational Program, and we celebrate Christian Holidays, but at the same time, respect other religions. We are a State Licensed and Insured Childcare Center in the State of Texas.

We hope that your experience at Little Explorers Academy is a good one and that you are secure in the fact that your child is well cared for. Please communicate with us regarding any questions or concerns you may have at any time.

*We are Proud to be a 4 Star School*



Warm Regards,

*DeAna*

Owner/Director

281-547-8989

**OPEN DOOR POLICY:** The Little Explorers Academy Center has an Open-Door Policy. Parents/Guardians may visit the childcare classroom at any time during the day without securing prior approval. We ask that parents/guardians do not enter their children's room, as unexpected and/or prolonged visits may disrupt the classroom's learning environment.

**SECURITY:** All doors that open to the exterior of the building will always remain locked. Teachers and staff are instructed not to open these doors for anyone, as all visitors should enter through the front door, past the security desk to Sign-in or Sign-out. For All Volunteers, a background check is required to be on file when you volunteer in the classroom on a regular basis.

## Center Philosophy and Mission Statement

Little Explorers Academy provides a loving, secure, nurturing, and premier educational environment for infants and children through exploration of learning; a place for confident children to grow into responsible, considerate and contributing members of society.

### TEACHING METHODS USED:

- ✓ We believe that children learn by doing and that play is their work.
- ✓ We believe that children need to have many experiences each day and that these experiences need to be planned around the themes for each month.
- ✓ We use well-planned learning centers and hands-on activities to stimulate learning and foster physical, cognitive, social-emotional growth and development, incorporating the family and community as an integral learning component.
- ✓ It is our priority to offer your child multiple teaching approaches which provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment while challenging him/her academically. We want to EXCEED your expectations.
- ✓ We feel that social competencies prime the brain for academic success.
- ✓ Every activity in the classroom should have a purpose, should be interesting, and should be inviting to the children.
- ✓ We recognize that the first five (5) years are the critical formative years, and our efforts will focus on helping your child develop the life skills necessary to be successful.
- ✓

Our activities are carefully planned to encourage social interaction, fine and gross motor development, proper use of the English and Spanish languages, and other readiness skills. Children are never forced to participate in activities but are encouraged to try many new things. We strive to nurture them through a variety of appealing experiences that allow them to make choices and to develop at their own rate. It is our desire that every child who graduates from our program will be equipped with the skills needed for success both academically and socially.

## OUR GOALS ARE TO DEVELOP THE WHOLE CHILD

### **SPIRITUALLY:**

- To grow in knowledge and love of God, Jesus and the Bible
- To help children realize the special wonder of God's creations
- Students will receive biblical training to help them grow in their knowledge of and faith in Jesus Christ
- Students will be challenged to honor those in authority, be characterized by the fruit of the Spirit, behave responsibly, treat everyone respectfully, and excel in all they do, for the glory of God
- To learn to communicate God's love to those with whom they interact

### **ACADEMICALLY:**

- To think independently
- To broaden their range of interests
- To develop the use of the English language
- To recognize simple relations and basic mathematical concepts
- To develop a love of learning at a young age

### **PHYSICALLY:**

- To establish desirable health, hygiene and nutritional habits
- To develop gross and fine motor skills
- To know and follow simple rules of safety

### **SOCIALLY:**

- To grow in the ability to work and play with others
- To develop social competencies
- To develop an attitude of kindness and cooperation toward others
- To accept responsibility for one's actions

### **EMOTIONALLY:**

- To build positive self-worth as a creation of God
- To recognize desirable and undesirable emotional reactions
- To learn self-regulation as it relates to emotionally challenging behavior

### **HOURS OF OPERATION AND SCHOOL CALENDAR:**

Little Explorers Academy Regular Open Hours are 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Closed on Saturday and Sunday. We do have a Drop Off Cut Off Time of 10:00am, so if later, we ask to be notified, via ProCare, so we can ensure the adequate number of teachers per student. The Little Explorers Academy operates 12 months a year and will be closed for the following holidays: **New Year's Eve; New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; President's Day; Good Friday; Memorial Day; Juneteenth, Independence Day; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Thanksgiving Day; Black Friday; Christmas Eve; Christmas Day.** If the Holiday falls on a Saturday, the center will be closed the preceding Friday; if the Holiday falls on a Sunday, we may be closed the following Monday. In the event of temporary low enrollment at the Little Explorers Academy, the staffing pattern may be adjusted to re-group children and reduce staff until the regular enrollment pattern resumes. Full Tuition will still be charged on weeks with the above holidays, early closures and expected to be paid. Tuition is based on an Annual Basis, not Attendance, and is charged as such. A fee schedule will be written for you, if requested, and will include charges for late pick-up.

### **ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY:**

- ✓ Little Explorers Academy will enroll children Newborns through 12 years old, this includes school-aged children for before and after school care. Infants under the age of 6 weeks may be enrolled on a case-by-case basis with clearance in writing from a doctor. We will not discriminate on any basis, including religion, political affiliation, race, color, sex, and/or mental or physical disabilities.
- ✓ Little Explorers Academy employees may have priority for enrolling their children at Little Explorers Academy. Others may enroll as space is available and upon being accepted into the program. Part-time, Temporary or Drop-in Enrollments will be considered on a case-by-case basis only and may not be always available. Contact staff to discuss special enrollment arrangements.

### **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE:**

To enroll a child at Little Explorers Academy, a complete Registration Packet and the following Accompanying Documents are required to be on file prior to any child attending: **Completed Application, Food Program Participation, Immunization Record, Physician Statement of Health, Physician Signed Allergy FARE Form, Exception for Milk Form, Vision & Hearing Screening for 4- & 5-year old's, Topical Items Authorization, Medication Authorization, Statement of Special Needs, Infant Feeding Plan, Infant Sleep Form and Authorization for Topical Items to be Applied.** Once all these documents are submitted to the director or designee, with the appropriate Registration and Fees paid, your child will be enrolled at our school.

The childcare director or designee will review the class lists and abilities of the child, to determine when enrollment will be possible and what classroom placement is best.

In some cases, applicants may need to put their name on a waiting list until an opening is available in the appropriate classroom or age group.

### ENROLLMENT and WAITING LIST:

Little Explorers Academy will enroll the maximum number of children in each age group then start a waiting list for that classroom. Applications received for the waiting list will be date stamped and handled accordingly once the Registration Fee is paid. The childcare director or administrator will monitor the waiting list and contact the next person on the list as space becomes available. No refunds will be issued for holding a spot.

### COMMUNICATION - UPDATES of INFORMATION – PARENT CONFERENCE PROCEDURE:

Parents will be Notified of Important Information by Email, Messages sent Home, Verbally, and through the ProCare Application. To update Personal Information, address, phone number, etc. or to request a Parent Conference, please update it on the ProCare App or email us at:

[LittleExplorersKids@gmail.com](mailto:LittleExplorersKids@gmail.com)

At a minimum of once a year, this information must be updated or more frequently as needed.

### MEALS, SNACKS and NUTRITION:

Weekly and Monthly tuition includes Breakfast (7:00-8:30), Lunch (11:00-12:30) and two to three snacks per day, providing the parent returns the **Food Program Packet** initially and upon each year's renewal. **If we do not receive the Food Program Packet Annually, Food will cost \$35.00 per week for your child, or you may provide the meals and snacks for your child each day.** We will serve meals in a "served" dining manner for our two-year-old classrooms and older, if applicable. A monthly menu will be provided online through our website and posted in the lobby for parent's viewing. It will also be posted on our info board in the hallway. Parents of infants must provide formula or breast milk and appropriate baby food until the child is able to eat "table food." A written Feeding Plan must be updated monthly and signed by a parent, for all children under 13 months or until the child is eating table food. If you provide your child's meals and/or snacks from home, LEA is not responsible for the nutritional value or for meeting your child's daily food needs. Fast food and restaurant food is not allowed.

- ✓ A Monthly Menu will be posted on our Lobby Bulletin Board and on our website.
- ✓ We are **NOT** a "**Peanut-FREE Zone.**" So please **advise of ALL Nut Allergies.**
- ✓ If your child requires a Special Diet for medical purposes or Substitutions, we must have a written statement from a licensed physician or registered/licensed dietician, or the parent or guardian placed in your child's records.
- ✓ If your child does not want to eat what we serve, we will discuss recurring eating concerns with you and encourage, but not force your child to eat.
- ✓ If you wish to provide additional food items for picky eaters, allergy restrictions or religious reasons, you must provide healthy food items that must be stored in a labeled container that will keep the food fresh and safe.
- ✓ All milk substitutes shall be provided in a store packaged container weekly for your child. We will notify you when we need more. We have a list of approved substitutions.
- ✓ All staff are trained on food allergies and take precaution to ensure children are protected.
- ✓ Water will be offered during each meal, snacks during & after physical activities, and throughout the day or evening. Milk will be offered during all meals. We will serve the required amounts as stated by the U.S.D.A. Children are welcome to ask for water at any time during the day.
- ✓ On special occasions only, your child will be served fruit juice, lemonade, flavored water, cupcakes, cookies and other snacks.

**INFANTS – SAFE SLEEP POLICY for Newborns to 12 months old:** We shall adhere to the rules in Title 26, Part 1, Chapter 746, Subchapter H regarding sleep requirements and restrictions of infants. All infants will be placed on their backs for sleeping and parents must sign this form at enrollment.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS:**

Your child should not bring toys, sippy cups, jewelry or other items from home. This policy prevents hurt feelings, loss or broken belongings. If your child is in a classroom that has Show-and-Tell, the teacher will set guidelines on allowable items that may be brought and how they will be handled in the classroom. You are allowed to bring your child's security items, for children under one year old, such as a pacifier. **These items must be labeled with the child's First Name and Last Initial** to prevent loss of property. A black permanent marker is best for labeling. Parents of infants and toddlers (not potty trained) must provide diapers, baby wipes and ointments for their child. LEA assumes no responsibility of personal items and any unauthorized items will be kept in the Lobby and not accessible to your child during the day.

### **ITEMS NEEDED AT SCHOOL:**

#### **INFANT CLASSROOMS (Newborn to 17 months):**

- ✓ Labeled (First Name and Last Initial) Bottles pre-filled with Formula or Breast Milk
- ✓ Labeled (First Name and Last Initial) Caps for the Bottles
- ✓ Baby food, labeled (First Name and Last Initial) and dated
- ✓ Diapers and Wipes, labeled (First Name and Last Initial)
- ✓ Diaper rash cream (Form to Apply must be Signed), labeled (First Name and Last Initial)
- ✓ 2-3 changes of clothing in a zip lock baggie, labeled (First Name and Last Initial)
- ✓ Security item/pacifier (labeled- First Name and Last Initial) – Animals and Strings are not allowed on a pacifier.
- ✓ Appropriate outerwear such as coats, hats, sweaters, sweatshirts, etc.

#### **18 MONTH CLASSROOMS TO 12 YEARS:**

- ✓ Labeled Diapers, Pull Ups (Side Opening), Wipes (First Name and Last Initial)
- ✓ 2-3 changes of clothing, including socks and underwear (Swimming suit on Specified Day, when weather permits for Water Days, labeled (First Name and Last Initial)
- ✓ Appropriate outerwear such as coats, hats, sweaters, sweatshirts, etc., labeled (First Name and Last Initial)

### **CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES:**

**All children** will need an extra change of clothing each day so we can participate in Water Days, Sand Play and more. You must leave a change at school. Label all items to prevent loss (First Name and Last Initial). If your child has toilet accidents, please arrange to have several changes of clothing available each day, **at least 3 changes** are requested. **Close-toed shoes are always required and any infant who is walking is required to always have shoes on.**

Play clothes must be worn so that your child may participate in all planned activities. The Activities Areas will have smocks available for children to wear while playing with finger paints, water, and clay; however, the smocks may not protect clothing completely.

A part of each day is spent outside. You will need to dress your child in seasonally appropriate clothing, including coats, hats, and proper shoes.

Each child, once walking, needs to wear **covered toe shoes** each day. The best shoes are sneakers or tennis shoes.

Cowboy boots, sandals, flip-flops and "Crocs" are not preferred at the center for safety purposes. They pose a serious slipping/sliding risk on our sidewalks and play equipment. Additionally, cowboy boots, sandals, flip-flops and "Crocs" do not provide children with the leverage and support needed to run and jump during active play. Boots also hurt when they land on little fingers. Should your child wear any of this inappropriate footwear, we will not be responsible for incidents or accidents.

In the interest of safety, please leave all jewelry at home. Necklaces, bracelets, rings, and hair beads all pose choking hazards with their small pieces. Lost or broken “treasures” can lead to unhappy tears and the Center is not responsible for any missing items.

### **EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS USING THE CHILDCARE PROGRAM:**

Assisting parents with childcare arrangements underscores Little Explorers Academy dedication to the education of all students in the area. All parents accepted into our childcare or preschool program is expected to always abide by the following policies:

- ✓ As a Courtesy, you must Report All Absences as they occur for the Safety of Your Child. You may E-mail or message through the ProCare App.
- ✓ Only the legal custodial parent, grandparent or guardian, or other designated persons who are listed on the Pick-Up Form will be allowed to pick up the child. Emergency contact and all designated persons must be listed on the child's registration form in writing. Identification will be required before the child is released.
- ✓ Parents/Guardians are expected to use the proper Sign-in and Sign-out procedures and notify the Center of any absences.
- ✓ Parents are expected to maintain open communication with Little Explorers Academy staff in all matters related to the care of the child including changes of telephone, address, emergency contact information, health and immunization records and authorization to secure medical assistance. Changes can be submitted anytime via email or as a message on ProCare.
- ✓ Parents are expected to not leave unauthorized items with their child at school (Sippy Cups, Toys, Jewelry, Stuffed Animals, etc.)
- ✓ PARENT CONFERENCES: You should speak privately with Little Explorers Academy staff if you have a concern about your child or any other child or parent at Little Explorers Academy. All information about your child and other children who attend the school is kept confidential. We expect you to keep the information confidential as well. All parents may request a conference at any time. We will schedule a minimum of two conferences with parents/guardian per year.
- ✓ When bringing children to Little Explorers Academy, parents should allow enough time to put away child's personal belongings, help the child settle into the classroom and to communicate important information about the child to Little Explorers Academy staff.
- ✓ In advance or within 14 calendar days after any change in school, you must inform Little Explorers Academy staff and the childcare director or designee.
- ✓ Regardless, if you do not notify Little Explorers Academy staff that you are no longer attending school, you will be responsible for paying all childcare payments made while ineligible.

Please be aware that your attendance at school will be reviewed by Little Explorers Academy. If your absences are excessive, the agency will review and possibly shorten your ability to hold the classroom spot. There will be no refunds or reductions in tuition for absences. All children are given two free weeks from tuition per year beginning on the day of enrollment. Both weeks must be taken as a week at a time and not by the day. All additional absent days will be subject to a fee of half the tuition. Two weeks off will not transfer from year to year.

Also, your enrollment in our school may end if your child is absent for 10 days or more in a 12-month period. It also will end if your child is absent for 5 or more consecutive days, and you have not contacted the Academy and Little Explorers Academy staff to explain the absences.

### **CURRICULUM USED – FROG STREET, REGGIO ÉMILIA, MONTESSORI, STEAM-BASED: Enrichments – Music Appreciation, Science, Technology, Engineering, Creative Arts, Mathematics, Spanish, Bible, Fitness, Cooking, Gardening and More:**

Providing a well-balanced, child-centered approach to curriculum development will be a priority of this program and that is why we use multiple approaches. All children learn differently; however, our curriculum approach will have a strong emphasis on language and literacy development for all. We will place children according to their ability and not necessarily their age. Classroom promotions occur as needed and throughout the year.

Planning will be derived from teacher's observations of children, developmentally appropriate practices, and informed understanding of sound early childhood theory. A healthy balance between child-directed and teacher-directed activities will be accomplished in the following ways:

- ✓ Using Developmentally Appropriate Practice as a guide, Little Explorers Academy staff will monitor and select activities according to the ages and abilities of the children within a group, technology will be used when appropriate.
- ✓ Strong phonemic awareness and preparation for reading and writing readiness will be evidenced in activities that promote singing, rhyming, finger plays, proper use of language and communication skills, magnetic letters, creative storytelling and story invention, use of puppetry, big books and other opportunities that promote creative thinking processes and encourage children to explore their own language abilities.
- ✓ Development of math concepts and emerging math skills such as sorting, ordering, counting, labeling, classifying, measuring, pouring and estimating will be included in daily planning.
- ✓ Little Explorers Academy will routinely include activities that foster appreciation for the fine arts with activities that encourage children to express themselves physically and aesthetically, represent feelings and ideas, and acquire fundamental concepts and skills achieved through art appreciation, music and movement, cooking and gardening.
- ✓ Emphasis will be placed on social and emotional development as it relates to helping children learn socially acceptable behaviors and strong interpersonal skills to support friendships, self-esteem, positive self-worth and develop a comprehensive understanding of how to work in small groups and independently.
- ✓ Planning will include opportunities for sensory and motor experiences such as sand and water play, dancing, movement and rhythm activities, play dough, cooking, woodworking, gardening and other hands-on activities.

Assessment of children's learning is essential to appropriate planning and teachers will compile portfolios throughout the school year. Observing, recording and documenting children's successes and areas for growth will be the basis for a variety of education decisions that affect planning for groups as well as individual children. The school staff will meet with parents to discuss children's individual milestones achieved and to set goals for continued success at least two times a year.

### **DISCIPLINE AND POSITIVE GUIDANCE – we us the Conscious Discipline Method:**

Preschoolers are learning to be part of a social group. Juggling his or her own needs with those of the group is sometimes difficult for the young child. For this reason, preschool teachers view discipline as a time to help children learn new social skills.

The techniques teachers will use include redirection, rest your body and modeling words and actions to use in solving problems and a chance to try again, as well as modifying the environment or routine to better meet the children's needs.

Only after the teacher has tried other techniques will a child be removed from the group and placed in another area of the room or with an administrator until he or she is ready to return to the activity. At no time will physical punishment, demeaning or embarrassing tactics be used to correct children or modify their behaviors. If behavior is out of control and not corrected in a reasonable amount of time, parents will be called, and the child may be removed from care for the day.

#### **Discipline will be:**

- 1) Individualized and consistent for each child.
- 2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- 3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

**Our staff may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:**

- 1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.
- 2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements.



- 3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- 4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

**There will be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:**

- 1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
- 2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training.
- 3) Grabbing or pulling a child.
- 4) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth.
- 5) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child.
- 6) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
- 7) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet
- 8) Placing a child in a restrictive device for time out.
- 9) Withholding active play or keeping a child inside consequently for behavior, unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires a brief supervised separation or time out that is consistent with §746.2803(4)(D).
- 10) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Any child whose behavior is considered inappropriate at school will have that behavior pointed out to him/her, and the reason why this behavior is inappropriate will be explained and corrected. After one warning, discipline will follow. Time out or Resting their Body is the preferred form of childcare discipline at our preschool facility. This will consist of the child being placed in an area from the other children, yet still in the same preschool classroom and in the clear vision of the teacher. Teachers will document behavior concerns in a message to the parents or behavior log if needed.

Any inappropriate activity that persists after this will be addressed with the teacher and/or administrator and possibly a conference will be set up with the parents. Parents will be notified at the time of inappropriate behavior does not stop, including after resting your bodies, and a visit from the administrator. Children may be suspended from school at the discretion of the Director or designee. We will work with the parents and child to correct any inappropriate behavior the best we can; however, if the behavior continues to be disruptive to other students or becomes a safety issue, the Director or designee has the final decision as to whether the child will remain enrolled at our preschool.

Inappropriate behaviors include, but are not limited to: Hitting, Kicking, Throwing Items, Spitting, Biting, Verbal Disobedience, Scratching, Pinching and others as defined by the teacher and Administrator.

**\*If after all options are tried, and satisfactory improvement is not noted, the child may be asked to permanently leave Little Explorers Academy, by the director or designee, as a final measure.**

### **TERMINATION POLICY:**

Family's may be asked to withdraw from the school's program for the following reasons without notice:

- Delinquency in the Tuition, Registration Fees, Supply Fees or Late Fees Payment.
- The child or parent is unable to follow the center's policies and rules.
- Parents fail to provide the required records necessary to comply with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Service.
- Parents are consistently late in picking up their child or children.
- Aggressive or inappropriate behavior by a Parent or Child.
- Biting, Spitting, Bullying, Physical, Throwing, Hitting, Kicking, Scratching, Pinching, Verbal Abuse or any other forms of violence of other Children or Staff.

***Should the center become unable to provide care, advance notice will be given in as much time as possible; however, not guaranteed based on the severity of the situation.***

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS and FAMILY INVOLVEMENT and COMMUNICATION:**

Our staff at Little Explorers Academy has an Open-Door Policy and wants to assist parents in understanding the developmental stages their children experience, enabling them to contribute most effectively to the child's growth and enrichment. Parents are encouraged to visit Little Explorers Academy and observe how their child interacts with the staff and other children. You are always welcome to visit the program and participate in all activities of the program for short times. We always want to make sure the visit does not upset the child. If your visit becomes disruptive to your child or the other children, you will be asked to return on another day. If long visits are desired, special training and a background check is required.

As important events occur in your child's life or in your family, please share these with the teachers. These might include the death of a pet, moving to a new house, the illness of a grandparent, or even the separation of parents. Informed teachers will be better able to support your child and tell you how your child is responding to these events. Please know that information you share with your child's teacher is confidential and will not be shared with others. We have your consent to e-mail, text, phone and send any other means of communication needed during and after your child's enrollment at LEA.

We value parent ideas and input and want to have ongoing conversations with you to express concerns and discuss strategies for addressing challenging behaviors. Conversations shall be framed around school readiness and the objectives of our program. We will keep all parents informed on their child's progress on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. We also value our time in the classroom with your child. For this reason, we respectfully ask parents to schedule a private meeting, in the form of a conference, to discuss issues and concerns that may arise during a child's enrollment rather than discussing concerns in the presence of children or other observers in common areas. We want to give you our undivided attention and this is not possible when the teachers are responsible for children.

The Childcare staff strives to provide many avenues of communication with all parents. Please feel free to utilize the ProCare App, voice mail, email and written notes as methods of communicating with your child's teacher; however, be aware classroom teachers spend most their time working directly with children. Voice mail and email messages will be returned as promptly as possible.

Email and messaging through the ProCare Application will be used to communicate most school-wide announcements. Please be sure to provide a current email address to your child's teacher as well as to the school's admin staff. Changes to policies and/or procedures affecting the childcare program will be communicated to parents through email and the Parent Handbook will be updated and made available accordingly. Notify Little Explorers Academy staff if you do not have access to email. A print copy will be provided for you. The childcare director is available to discuss the policies and procedures of the program and parents are invited to share their comments or concerns.

- ✓ Website Parent Portal, ProCare App, Information Bulletin Boards, Parent Area in Lobby
- ✓ Notes sent home, Newsletters, Check-in Computer, Email, Telephone, Texts
- ✓ Parent Conferences, minimum of two per year are suggested.
- ✓ PLEASE UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION AT ALL TIMES THROUGH OUR WEBSITE:  
www.LittleExplorersKids.com OR EMAIL: LittleExplorersKids@gmail.com

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

Little Explorers Academy will follow the emergency procedures written in our Emergency Procedure Manual, including conducting Fire Drills, Evacuations, Lockdowns and Tornado Drills. We will conduct Monthly Fire Drills and Quarterly Lockdowns and Severe Weather Drills that will be properly documented down. You may request to view these procedures and our Evacuation Plan will also be posted on the Information Board for your review. See Page 23 of this Handbook for evacuation route and location. Communications shall take place through our ProCare application, as we may not have internet or our landline telephone. Should we be engaged in a drill, please do not interrupt the process, enter the building or drive through the area coned off.

## CHILDCARE LICENSING – STATE AND FEDERAL GUIDELINES:

Little Explorers Academy is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). You can reach our local office at: [936-756-1551](tel:936-756-1551). A full-text copy of the Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Childcare Centers is available for review at [www.HHSC.state.tx.us](http://www.HHSC.state.tx.us).

As a parent or guardian with a child enrolled in the childcare, you have the right to review all current inspections conducted by the DFPS, the Fire Department, the Health Department, and any other inspections as may be required for the operation of the childcare. To review these documents, please contact the center director or designee. The most current inspections will be posted on our Lobby Bulletin Board for your review.

**Our State License Number is: 1687543**

**Contact Information for Parents:**

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (local office) [www.HHSC.state.tx.us/](http://www.HHSC.state.tx.us/)

**Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline: (800) 252-5400 [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)**

## NAPTITUDE AND QUIET TIME:

We are Required to provide a supervised sleep or rest period after lunch each day for all preschool children 18 months of age and older. Naptime or Quiet-Time will be from 12:00 to 2:30 PM, each day. We will provide a clean, sanitized cot, sheet and blanket for each child. Quiet activities will be offered in place of sleeping. As approved by parents, 6–12-year-olds may play on tablets during this time but is at the discretion of the administrator that day. Blankets and pillows from home are discouraged.

## RELEASE OF CHILDREN:

Little Explorers Academy will not release your child to anyone other than you or the person(s) you list on your child's registration form. Make sure your list is always up to date and that you notify the front desk in writing of any changes. The director or designee may have full discretion at determining alternative pick-ups at the request of the parent. Child will not be released if pick up person appears impaired in any way.

Anyone you ask to pick up your child will be required to show a photo identification card, such as a driver's license. If deemed necessary, the childcare staff may take additional steps to verify a guest's identity by contacting you at time of pick up for additional information before releasing the child to the guest's custody. Please be sure we know how to always reach you. You can change personal information at any time through email or in person.

## HEALTH AND ILLNESS:

If your child becomes ill at school, he or she may be given a sleeping mat and placed in a quiet area to rest until you arrive. It is important that you make alternate arrangements to provide care for your child when he or she becomes ill. The staff cannot allow a sick child to remain at the school. Sick children should be picked up within one (1) hour of parent notification, please. You will be asked to keep your child home until all symptoms of any illness have passed, and the child is no longer contagious.

### ***A child will be excluded from the center when:***

- ✓ The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities, including outside.
- ✓ The illness results in a need for greater care than the school staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

### Specific Conditions which Require Exclusion from the classroom and Center:

- **Fever:** exclude until child has been afebrile for 24 hours, or until medical evaluation indicates inclusion.
  - ✓ Ear temperature of 100 degrees or greater, Armpit temperature above 100 degrees either accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
  - ✓ An infrared temporal (forehead) temperature above 100 degrees, Oral temperature of 101 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
  - ✓ Signs of possible severe illness, including unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing.
  - ✓ **Uncontrolled diarrhea**, defined as an **increased number of stools** compared with the child's normal pattern, with increased stool water and/or decreased form. **Even one diarrheal incident may require exclusion if it is not contained by the child's diaper** or if it is combined with other symptoms. Exclude until symptoms have disappeared for 48 hours with no medication.
  - ✓ Vomiting two or more times in the previous 48 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition, and the child is not in danger of dehydration. Exclude until symptoms have disappeared for 48 hours with no medication.
  - ✓ Mouth sores with drooling.
  - ✓ Rash with fever or behavior changes.

LEA Staff are required to complete a daily Health Check on your child upon arrival and throughout the day. Any concerns will be documented in the ProCare Daily Report.

**NOTE:** Little Explorers Academy will take children's temperatures on the forehead. Oral, Ear, Armpit and Rectal methods for taking temperatures will not be used.

### SPECIFIC CONDITIONS WHICH REQUIRE EXCLUSION:

- ✓ Purulent conjunctivitis, defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye. The child may return 24 hours after treatment begins and symptoms have disappeared.
- ✓ Infestation (e.g., scabies, head lice), may return after treatment. All nits or egg sacks must be removed prior to the child's return. It is necessary for the classroom teacher and/or administrative staff to check for continued infestation upon child's return to school.
- ✓ Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment begins.
- ✓ Streptococcal pharyngitis, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated, and until the child has been afebrile for 24 hours.
- ✓ Pinworm and Ringworm infections, until 24 hours after treatment begins.
- ✓ Chicken Pox, until 6 days after onset of rash or until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- ✓ Measles
- ✓ Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- ✓ Mumps and Rubella
- ✓ E Coli
- ✓ Salmonella
- ✓ Campylobacteria
- ✓ Cryptosporidiosis
- ✓ Hemophilus Influenzae (FLU)
- ✓ Hepatitis A
- ✓ Thrush
- ✓ Hand-Foot and Mouth Disease
- ✓ Meningitis
- ✓ Tuberculosis (May not return until cleared by Local Health Department)
- ✓ Shigella
- ✓ COVID-19 and any Variants
- ✓ Any Other Disease or Illness Exclusion from a Group Care in Accordance with State Childcare, Health Department Regulations or at the discretion of the Director.

Policies developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics/American Public Health Association pertaining to the exclusion of children with other contagious diseases will be followed and a Clearance Letter from a Medical Doctor may be required to return.

**Children cannot enter the Center if they have any symptoms of Any Communicable Disease and May Not Return until they are No Longer Contagious. This includes items listed above. The Center Director Can Exclude any Child who he/she Believes is too ill to be at the Center.**

We may Notify you if we become aware that an Employee or a Child in our Center's Care has Contracted a Communicable Disease that the Law Requires Us to Report.

Please tell us of any issue that may affect other children in our care. We will keep the information confidential according to Law and will only share the Information with those that Need to Know or are Required by Law.

### **SPECIFIC CONDITIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE EXCLUSION:**

- ✓ Children who have a type of germ in their bowel movement or urine that can cause disease, but that is not giving any symptoms to the child whose stool or urine contains the germ.
- ✓ Children with conjunctivitis (pink eye) who have a clear, watery eye discharge and do not have any fever, eye pain, pus coming from the eye, or eyelid redness. Severity may lead to exclusion.
- ✓ Children with a rash, but no fever or change in behavior (must be released by a physician).
- ✓ Children with cytomegalovirus infection, carriers of hepatitis B and HIV infection.
- ✓ Children with a clear nasal discharge; however, please note that cloudy, yellow, or green nasal discharge can be a sign of infection and can lead to exclusion from school.

### **PROCEDURE FOR MANAGEMENT OF ILLNESS and MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:**

#### **If a child appears mildly ill,**

- ✓ parent will be notified by the school director or designee. The director will inform the parent of child's symptoms and review the policies and procedures for school participation.
- ✓ child will be cared for apart from the other children. In most cases, the child will be given a rest mat and a quiet place to rest within the classroom but away from the rest of the children.
- ✓ child must be picked up within 1-hour of parent notification.

Some communicable diseases must be reported to public health authorities so that control measures can be used. The list of these diseases can be found on the communicable disease chart in the Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Childcare Centers. A complete copy of the Minimum Standard Rules is available for review online at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us). Notify the center director if your child's physician determines your child has a reportable disease.

When contagious illnesses, such as flu, chicken pox, etc., appear in a class, notices will be posted on the bulletin board and a message will be sent to all parents. The ill child's identity will not be revealed in any posted or emailed notices.

***\*\*\*\* Should a Child require immediate care from a Physician, an Ambulance will be called, if needed or the Child Transported by Staff to the Child's listed Urgent Care Center for an evaluation and the Parents contacted immediately.***

A current record of a medical physical is required of all children enrolled at Little Explorers Academy. Immunization records and physicals must be kept up-to-date and documented at the childcare. All immunization records must have the healthcare provider's original signature or signature stamp to validate authenticity.

If medical diagnosis and treatment and/or immunization and TB testing conflict with your religious beliefs, you must sign an original affidavit from the State to that effect and attach it to the registration form. If immunization and/or Tuberculin -TB testing would be injurious to your child or family, you must obtain a certificate (signed by a physician) to that effect and attach it to the registration form.

## MEDICATIONS, SUNSCREEN, and INSECT REPELLANT:

When you bring prescribed medication, sunscreen or insect repellent to the school for your child, you will be asked to complete a "Permission to Administer/Apply" Form. Childcare licensing requires that these items must have current expiration dates and, in the case of a prescription, have been prescribed to the child in question. Little Explorers Academy may not administer medication or apply these items that have been prescribed to or assigned to anyone else. The following guidelines must be followed when bringing prescribed medications, bug spray and sunscreen to the school:

1. Both prescription medications, sunscreen and insect repellent must be in the original container and Accompanied by a Written Physician's Note or Parent's Written Permission to administer/apply.
2. The label must include the following information:
  - Date and Child's Name
  - Specific directions for dosages/applications and times to be given or applied.
  - Physician's name (if prescription medication) if applicable and Expiration Date
3. Prescribed Medications, sunscreen, and insect repellents must be administered according to label directions, including obtaining instructions from your doctor if your child falls into an age range for which the label states to 'consult a physician. Your child's teacher or an administrator can help guide you in the proper procedures for this.

Administration may administer over-the-counter medications on a case-by-case basis only or in the case of an Emergency. *We will not accept open-ended directives from parents to administer medications prescribed or over the counter.*

**Note:** Medications, sunscreens and insect repellents are stored in a storage area that is locked. It is unsafe to leave them in your child's cubby, backpack, or diaper bag. Please ask for assistance from the childcare staff for proper storage of these items. If medications are out of date or abandoned, we will dispose of them accordingly.

## IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS:

Little Explorers Academy is required to abide by the Immunization Guidelines set forth by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Our Staff is not required any specific immunizations as adults. The guidelines are as follows:

- a) Each child enrolled or admitted to childcare centers must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of Health Immunization Requirements in Texas Elementary and Secondary Schools and Institutions of Higher Education. This requirement applies to all children in care from birth through 17 years of age.
- b) Except as otherwise provided in this division, all immunizations required for the child's age must be completed by the date of admission.
- c) A child may be enrolled provisionally for up to 5 days if the parent can provide written documentation from a health care professional that the child has received at least one immunization in each series required for that age child, and a statement of when the remaining immunizations will be completed.
- d) Documents acceptable for immunization records must have been validated by a physician or other health care professional with a signature or rubber stamp and include:
  - The child's name and birth date.
  - The number of doses and vaccine type; and
  - The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination.
- e) Documentation on file at Little Explorers Academy may be the original record, a photocopy, or a handwritten copy that Little Explorers Academy director or school nurse has verified.

- f) Exclusions to the Texas School Immunization Requirements
- Exclusions from compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical contraindications, religious conflicts, and active duty with the armed forces of the United States. Children and students in these categories must submit evidence for exclusion from compliance as specified in Texas Education Code, Chapter 38 and the Human Resources Code, Chapter 42.
  - Religious conflict: A signed affidavit must be presented by the child's parent or guardian stating that the immunization conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious organization of which the applicant is an adherent or member. This exemption does not apply in times of emergency or outbreak declared by the commissioner of health or the local health authority.

The state does not have a list of specific religions to accept under the religious exemption clause. The statute does not require that the family state their religion in an affidavit nor must they verbally announce their denomination.

- g) Additional information or clarification can be obtained on the Texas Department of Health Internet website at: [www.tdh.state.tx.us/immunize](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/immunize).

***We will need an updated immunization record and physical every time your child goes to the doctor.***

#### **BITING:**

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected in a preschool setting. The best way to deal with biting is consistency and communication between providers and parents. Proper communication will help determine why a child is biting. We will work with a child who bites to teach appropriate behavior; however, for the safety of all children, unresolved or repetitive biting issues will result in suspension and/or termination of care. Parents are expected to assist with correcting this unacceptable behavior.

#### **VISION & HEARING SCREENING REQUIREMENT:**

Little Explorers Academy is required to abide by the Vision & Hearing Screening Requirements set forth by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. The guidelines are as follows:

- ✓ The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, requires a screening or a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems for the following children who are enrolled in a childcare center:
  - First-time enrollees who are four (4) years of age or older and all children enrolled in programs who are four years of age by September 1 of each year will be screened for possible vision and hearing problems prior to completion of the first semester of enrollment or within 120 calendar days of enrollment, whichever is longest, or present evidence of screening conducted one year prior to enrollment; and
  - Each child who is in the first, third, fifth, or seventh grade must complete a screening or examination within the school year.
- ✓ A licensed or certified screener or a health care professional must conduct the screening. Refer to Texas Health and Safety Code 36.011, for specifics on vision and hearing screening. This information may be accessed on the Internet at: [www.tdh.state.tx.us/vhs](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/vhs)
- ✓ Little Explore Academy must keep one copy of the following for each child required to be screened:
  - The individual vision and hearing screening; or
  - A signed statement from the child's parent that the child's screening records are current and on file at the pre-kindergarten program or school the child attends away from Little Explorers Academy. The statement must be dated and include the name, address, and telephone number of the pre-kindergarten program or school.

### **TURBERCULIN TESTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Requirements for Tuberculosis (TB) Testing varies across the States. Our Regional Health Department Does Not Require Tuberculosis Testing for Children or Staff in our Center.

### **ANIMALS/PETS AT THE CENTER:**

Childcare licensing standard rules for childcare programs states the following: Children at the childcare center will not have contact with chickens, ducks, and reptiles, such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads. Additionally, children will not be allowed to play with animals unfamiliar to the center or other animals that could be dangerous, including exotic animals such as lions, monkeys, and tigers.

### **LICE:**

We are committed to our children's health and well-being at LEA; therefore, we have adopted a "No-Nit" Policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the prevention and control of head lice. At any time during the year our staff may inspect any student for head lice. If nits or lice are identified during the inspection, the child will be removed from the classroom and the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the child. A child sent home for nits or lice, cannot return to school until a staff member or written letter from a doctor clears the child.

### **ILLNESS:**

We do not care for your child if they are sick as we are not a licensed sick care facility. If your child becomes ill at the Center, you may be contacted and asked to pick up your child within one (1) hour. If you cannot make the pickup in one (1) hour, someone listed on your child's Emergency Contact list must pick up your child.

### **BREASTFEEDING:**

While her child is in our care, a mother has the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for her child. A comfortable, quiet place with an adult-size chair will be provided in our center for breastfeeding. Please check with the daycare staff for the available accommodations. Upon request, parents can receive breastfeeding education and support resources in the community.

### **PEST CONTROL:**

The Center will have Monthly Pest Control Services. Any concerns, please notify the Center Director.

### **SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT:**

LEA is a Smoke-Free Environment, in compliance with Local, State and Federal Laws. Please Do Not Smoke while you are on Little Explorers Academy premises, including sidewalks.

### **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:**

LEA complies fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA Federal, State and Local Laws. We will make any reasonable accommodation we can to meet the needs. We shall follow the guidelines outlined in 746.2202 relating to our responsibilities when planning activities for a child with special needs.



**TUITION GUIDELINES:** Tuition is paid on a daily, weekly or monthly schedule as agreed upon, unless otherwise discussed and put in to writing. Payment is due on Friday, for the upcoming week and can be paid Weekly or Monthly, etc.

- **PAYMENT of TUITION:**

I understand that Tuition is Due and Payable, Friday for the upcoming week or on the First Day of Attendance Each Week. \* Weeks with School Breaks must be Paid on the Last Day of the Prior Week or is Considered Late. No refunds shall be given for days missed or scheduled holidays.

- **LATE or UNPAID TUITION:**

If Payment in Full is Not Received when Due, I agree to Pay a Late Fee of \$25.00 per week that Tuition is Not Received by Monday COB. All Late Fees are Subject to Change with Reasonable Notice. The school follows State Specific Required Time Frames on Tuition and Modifications Notices. I understand that if my Account is Delinquent More than One (1) Week, I may be asked to Withdraw my Child until my Account is Current and my child cannot stay until paid in full. The school cannot guarantee a child's spot will be held when a Child is Withdrawn due to Non-Payment of Tuition. I understand that I am responsible for any tuition payments and late fees.

- **CHARGES and PROCEDURES FOR LATE PICK-UP: We Must call CPS if over 1 hour late.**

My Full-Time Tuition covers up to 10 Hours of Care per Day, except for half days. Half Day Tuition covers up to 6 Hours of Care per Day. I understand that if I fail to Pick my Child Up by the Scheduled 10 or 6 Hours per day, I will be Charged an Hourly Rate of \$15-\$18.00 per hour, Per Child, Until the Child(ren) are picked up. No refunds given. All Late Pick Ups after 6:30pm will be charged \$25.00 at 6:31pm and \$1.00 per minute thereafter. All late fees are due immediately, as the staff goes into overtime pay. For every 15 minutes late, an additional \$25.00 will be charged.

EXAMPLE: *On Half Days and Holidays the Late Fees Double on the example below.*

{6:31pm - \$25.00 + \$15.00 (per minute) = \$40.00} {+ \$25.00 @ 6:45pm = \$65.00} {+ \$15.00 (per minute) + \$25.00 @ 7:00pm = \$105.00} {+ \$15.00 (per minute) + \$25.00 - 7:15pm = \$145.00} {+ \$15.00 (per minute) + \$25.00 - 7:30pm = \$185.00} – This continues the same for additional hours but is doubled.

- **ADDITIONAL FEES:**

All students will be charged an one time Non-Refundable Registration Enrollment Fee, which will secure a classroom spot. Field Trips or non compliance with the Food Program may incur an additional fee. No refunds shall be given at any time.

- **CHECKS and PAYMENTS:**

No Checks will be Accepted. Cash, ACH, Credit or Debit Only. No refunds shall be given.

- **VACATION and ABSENCES:**

Please notify the staff at least two (2) weeks prior to a scheduled vacation to avoid Tuition Charges. All students are allowed **one (1) week off, with written notice, without charge, each fiscal year, beginning from the day of enrollment and after six months of care.** Single days absent will not apply in the one week's vacation allowance. Unpaid Absences are not allowed and will be charged; no allowances, credits, refunds, or make up days will be given. Any weekly absences after the 1 allotted vacation week will be charged half tuition to hold the child's spot in the classroom on a weekly basis. Tuition is based on an annual basis, not attendance, and is expected to be paid even for absences or center closures.

- **DISCOUNTS:**

I understand that if I have more than one(1) child enrolled and attending from my immediate family, a 5% Discount from the usual Tuition Fee is offered to me and is applied to the Oldest Child. The youngest child will be charged full tuition. An Annual Discounted Family Enrollment Fee will apply for the family with multiple children enrolled. Discounts are only available when Full Tuition is Paid in Advance for all Children. Discounts are not available on Registration or other Fees. A 5% Discount will be Offered to Police, Fire Fighters, Teachers and Military when ID is presented. Only one discount applies and cannot be combined with any other offer. No refunds shall be given at any time. LEA Employees will receive 50% off on childcare during their active employment time.

## **DROP OFF & PICK UP PROCEDURES - SIGNING CHILDREN IN AND OUT:**

The following procedures are put into place to ensure the top safety of your child. All Parents/Guardians must follow these rules to maximize a safe and secure environment.

It is very important and a State Requirement for all Children to be signed in and out each day. Once your child(ren) is signed in on the tablet, you must personally walk your child(ren) to their classroom or designated area of drop off. Once you help your child settle in, place belongings into their assigned cubby, and acknowledge the teacher so they know your child is there. Drop off must be by 10:00 am unless we are notified. Pick up must be by 6:30 pm or Late Fees will be assessed as written.

## **APPEAL PROCESS:**

If you have any questions about the determination of your eligibility of these discounts, you may contact the center director or the owner at [LittleExplorersKids@gmail.com](mailto:LittleExplorersKids@gmail.com) with any questions and request a review of your case. All reviews are final.

## **POLICY WITHOUT REVIEW:**

All decisions by the director or the owner are final and there is no appeal for discounts. Families may reapply if their financial circumstances change.

## **SECURITY:**

LEA is very concerned with the Safety of your Child, Our Staff and the Facility. Our Center is Monitored with Cameras inside and outside the building, including Audio Recordings. We perform Background Checks on All Staff and Volunteers in this Center. The front and back doors are always locked for no unapproved entry. We do have state-of-the-art equipment for your child's safety.

## **VOLUNTEERS:**

Volunteers, which include parents, are always welcome in our classrooms; however, volunteers are required to have a Background Check on File at the Center and complete 10 hours of required training. Each Volunteer is responsible for the cost of their fingerprinting and training. Please communicate with the administrator up front for classroom visits or class participation.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY and WATER ACTIVITIES:**

All children, including infants over 6 months old, will have an opportunity to play outside daily for at least 30 - 60 minutes each time, twice a day in an age-appropriate playground. Strollers and evacuation cribs will be used to transport infants and young toddlers.

Appropriate Weather will be monitored by staff and measured by the "Childcare Weather Watch" Recommendations, which is posted on the information board in the hallways and on our website. Should the weather or temperature not be safe for the children, they will continue their active play in the gym. Temperatures over 95\* will be evaluated. Water will always be available during and after active play.

*(Child Care Weather Watch, Iowa Department Public Health, Healthy Child Care Iowa, Produced through federal grant (MCJ19T029 & MCJ19KCC7) funds from the US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration, Maternal & Child Health Bureau. Wind-Chill and Heat Index information is from the National Weather Service.)*

During the summer months and during hot days of throughout the year, we will utilize the use of sprinklers, wading pools, waterplay and other means of getting wet. You will be notified in advance of these days and will need to dress your child appropriately for the water play, including water shoes (no Crocs or Sandals please). Please provide your child with a Complete Set of Clothes and a Towel to change into for the remainder of the day and a towel.

**FIELD TRIPS & TRANSPORTATION:** May be provided for children over the age of 5 years old. Some fees may apply.

### **DATE NIGHT OR MOTHER'S DAY OUT:**

On Saturday Night (Except Holidays), LEA may Provide a Parent's Night Out, where we watch your child(ren) from 6:30 PM until 10:00 PM. A Cash Payment will be Paid that night and we will provide Childcare, Dinner, Movies and Activities. **Please sign up and pay cash, in advance, if you want to use this service, as it is not part of your regular Tuition, but is available as a parent benefit.**

### **PARKING LOT:**

To ensure the safety of our children, the speed limit in the parking lot is 5 mph.

### **PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT:**

Texas Law requires caregivers, all LEA Staff, to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department Family and Protective Services or Law Enforcement. Our employees receive Annual Training and are required to report such issues. In addition, every teacher is required to complete a Health Check on each Child and Document it daily.

Warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect include:

#### **Physical Abuse:**

- ✓ bruising, welts or burns that cannot be sufficiently explained
- ✓ withdrawn, fearful or extreme behavior
- ✓ clusters of bruises, welts or burns
- ✓ burns that are insufficiently explained
- ✓ injuries on children where children don't usually get injured

**Sexual Abuse:** difficulty walking or sitting pain or itching in the genital area torn, stained or bloody underclothing, frequent complaints of stomachaches or headaches venereal disease bruises or bleeding in external genitalia feeling threatened by physical contact inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex frequent urinary or yeast infections.

**Emotional Injury:** speech disorders inability to play as most children do sleeping problems anti-social behavior or behavioral extremes delays in emotional and intellectual growth

#### **Neglect:**

- ✓ lack of medical or dental care chronically dirty or unbathed
- ✓ lack of adequate attendance lack of supervision lack of proper nutrition
- ✓ lack of adequate shelter, alcohol or drug abuse
- ✓ self-destructive feelings or behavior

These warning signs are posted on the wall in the entrance of the daycare and included in our Family Handbook. Other resources are available upon request.

A flyer for reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation is also posted in the entrance of the daycare. Parents are encouraged to obtain assistance by speaking with LEA Staff or by Contacting a Local Community Agency Listed on the Board for help.

Parents of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should contact: **Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline (800)252-5400**. It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide. Abuse can be reported by going to [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org). Or your local law enforcement office, or **911**, if threat of imminent danger or ask a little Explorer Academy Staff Member.

### ELECTRONICS, INCLUDING CELL PHONES:

We do not allow any Electronics of Any Kind from Home to School. If your child brings them, they will be collected and kept at the front desk. We are Not Responsible for lost or stolen items. Only exceptions are for Camps, and they may bring a tablet daily if they are over 6 years of age.

### COMPUTER AND TELEVISION (SCREEN) TIME:

Children are limited to Structured Educational Use, like Educational Programs, only unless otherwise advertised like during Evening or Weekend Care. Television and Games may be used in the evening hours after 5:00 PM and during quiet time for schoolers, unless specified to the parents for special occasions. No child over the age of two years old shall have over 1 hour of screen time per day. Children under two years, will not have any screen time.

### BABYSITTING POLICY:

**LEA Staff are prohibited from providing private childcare or babysitting services to customers outside of the school. Staff and Parents shall not exchange phone numbers, emails, social media, etc. Breach of this policy shall lead to Termination of Services and Employment.**

### BIRTHDAYS:

We realize that your child's Birthday is a Special Day. Please discuss any Birthday Ideas you may have for Celebration with the Center Staff at least one week prior. We suggest non-food items; however, if you choose food, we ask you only bring commercially packaged foods that have ingredient labels to address any food allergy issues.

### CONFIDENTIALITY:

Much of the information you provide us is Confidential or Sensitive in nature. We will not share confidential or sensitive information, unless there is a "Needs to Know" or required by Law Enforcement or a Court. Similarly, parents should refrain from discussing confidential information with others.

### INTERVIEWING CHILDREN AND INSPECTION OF CHILD RECORDS:

Childcare Licensing, Child Protective Services, and Local Law Enforcement Authorities have the Right to Interview Children or Staff, look at all Child, Staff or Facility Records, Observe the Children in the Classroom and at the school, or Conduct a Medical Examination by a Licensed Physician of Any Child where Appropriate.

### SAFETY, CUSTODY AND VISITATION ISSUES:

LEA Staff will only comply with a Valid Court Order or Legal Parenting Agreement regarding custody and parenting visitation time. We wish to remain a Neutral Party when Divorced/Unmarried Parents share time. No child will be Released to Anyone, including a Parent or Relative, unless you have given your prior written authorization. We Require a Valid Subpoena before Issuing or Providing Any Copies of Any Records for use in Any Court Hearing. A court order is required to exclude a parent, previously approved for pick up. Any undefined case shall be ultimately determined by the director on duty to determine the safety of the child and whether a child is released or not. If an administrator feels that a child is in danger of the adult picking up the child; i.e.: intoxication, influence of drugs, or any other reason to believe the child will not be safe, has the Right and Duty to refuse to release the child to that person. Another person will be contacted on the approved list and if no one is available, the police.

### **POLICY AND PROCEDURE CHANGES:**

You agree to comply with all of LEA's existing Policies and Procedures, including the Family Handbook. We Reserve the Right, in our Sole Discretion, to Modify or Change Policies, Procedures or Programs, in Whole or in Part, at Any Time. You will be notified in Writing. For any questions or concerns regarding procedures or policies, please contact the Center Director for clarification.

### **MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION:**

If you have a dispute arising out of or relating in any way to the services provided by Little Explorers Academy LLC pursuant to the Enrollment Agreement, and you are not able to resolve such dispute in good faith directly with management, you agree on behalf of yourself and your child(ren) to participate in mediation conducted by a mutually agreed upon third party.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS, DIGITAL IMAGES, VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS:**

By enrolling in our school, you give LEA Staff permission for your child to be photographed, videotaped, audio taped and have digital images taken for any purpose, including social media. If you disagree with this, you may submit a written refusal in the Enrollment Packet. If parents pay for Live Streaming Camera Viewing, you will be limited to the child's classroom only, with no exceptions. Childcare Licensing staff has the right to view camera footage at any time for any reason.

### **MAINTAINING A CLEAN, SANITIZED AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT:**

We maintain a clean, sanitized and healthy environment to help prevent the spread of germs and communicable diseases. We teach cleanliness and proper hygiene with your child, including, frequent hand washing.

### **ALLERGIES and EPINEPHRINE AUTO INJECTORS:**

Please inform your Center Director and/or Classroom Teacher about Any Allergies your child may have. If your child requires medication for a Life Sustaining Condition, you Must Complete and Sign the Consent Waiver and Release to Administer Prescription Medication Form. Please provide Written Instructions from your child's physician on the F.A.R. E. Form as to the Nature of the Allergy, What Precautions are to be Taken to Avoid Reaction and What Steps to Follow Should a Reaction Occur. For children with Food Allergies, each month a Menu is posted on the Information Board in the Front Lobby and is posted on our website: [www.LittleExplorersKids.com](http://www.LittleExplorersKids.com) Should your child need alternative food choices, a written plan must be given to the school. We do not maintain or provide an unassigned epinephrine injector on site. It must be provided by the parents.

### **REFUND and SEPERATION POLICY:**

Little Explorers Academy is required to incur staff and operating costs even when your child does not attend school. Tuition Fees are based on an Annual Fee and are still required to be paid in the child's absence. Tuition is not pro-rated, reduced, refunded or waived for any reasons including, but not limited to: illness, holidays, unnotified vacations, vacations beyond 2 weeks per fiscal year, or emergency closures of the school. If you decide to keep your child home for any reason, tuition is still due, while the child is actively enrolled. A child may not re-enter the center without payment in full. If you withdraw your child, for any reason, no tuition will be credited or refunded.

### **GANG-FREE ZONE:**

Under Texas Penal Code, Little Explorers Academy recognizes that Any Area Within 1000 Feet of the Center Facility is a Gang-Free Zone, where Criminal Activities and Offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

## INTRUDERS and LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES:

In the event of a lockdown or potential threat in the school, the Director or Designee will Inform All Classrooms to implement lockdown procedures and parents/guardians will be notified via the ProCare Application, Text or Email with full instructions as soon as it is possible.

## TRANSPORTATION:

In the event Transportation is needed, we will not Transport any child under the age of 4 years old and 40 lbs., unless we have a proper car seat. The only exception to this is for an evacuation emergency. Parents may provide the safety seat system for use in transporting their child, provided the equipment is appropriate and can be properly secured in a vehicle. An exemption for car seats may occur in the case of emergencies.

A general-purpose vehicle – a passenger vehicles as defined in the Texas Transportation Code §545.412, and buses that do not meet the federal motor vehicle safety standards for school buses or multi-function school activity buses (MFSAB); shall be used until the need requires a larger vehicle. At that time, a small school bus – school buses and MFSABs that meet federal motor vehicle safety standards for school buses and MFSABs respectively and have a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or less shall be used.

The following precautions when loading and unloading children from any vehicle, including any type of bus will be used:

- (1) Driver must load and unload children at the curbside of the vehicle or in a protected parking area or driveway.
- (2) Driver must not allow a child to cross a street unless the child is accompanied by an adult any time before entering or after leaving a vehicle.
- (3) Driver must never leave a child unattended in a vehicle.

~ LEA program will ensure all children are accounted for when exiting a vehicle by:

- Using a list of children to verify each child by name
- Walk and check the inside of the vehicle, both in and under each seat
- Have a second person check the vehicle

A child may ride in a safety belt with a shoulder harness if the shoulder harness goes across the child's chest and not across the child's face or neck. The lap belt should fit low across the child's thighs or top of the legs and not across the child's stomach area. Never put a shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back. If the lap belt and shoulder harness do not fit properly, a booster seat must be used.

The following shall be in each vehicle used to transport children: (1) A list of the children being transported; (2) Emergency medical transport and treatment authorization forms for each child being transported; (3) The child-care center's name, child-care center director or permit holder's name, and child-care center telephone number in the glove compartment or clearly visible inside the passenger compartment, or the child-care center's name and telephone number must be clearly visible on the outside of the vehicle; (4) Parent's names and telephone numbers and emergency telephone numbers for each child being transported; (5) A fire extinguisher approved by the local or state fire marshal, secured in the passenger compartment and accessible to the adult occupants; and (6) A first-aid kit as specified in §746.4003 of this title (relating to What items must each first-aid kit contain?). (b) The driver must have a current driver's license.

LEA will ensure the driver/caregivers have clear instructions in handling emergency breakdowns and accidents, including vehicle evacuation procedures, supervision of the children, and contacting emergency help. The director or designee in charge of the child-care center shall know what action(s) to take in responding to a transportation emergency call.

LEA shall have the following:

- (1) A communications device such as a cellular phone on board the vehicle,
- (2) A Director or Assistant Director at the center that knows the routine arrival and departure times of the vehicle and acts if the vehicle does not return to the childcare center at a scheduled time.
- (3) The driver must travel a known fixed route within an approximate timeframe.

### **CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY:**

I understand that a Children's Product is Unsafe if it has been Recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). I can view a list of Current Recalls and Notices on the CPSC Website: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). Our school will also post a known notices on our lobby bulletin board.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN, INCEMENT WEATHER and EVACUATION:**

As you are aware, Little Explorers Academy conducts monthly Fire and Emergency Evacuation Drills. No advance notice will be given of these drills, days or times. If you are in the building or in the parking lot during a Fire or Emergency Drill, we ask that you Follow our Procedures and Evacuate the Building along with the Children. Please never disrupt the drill as it will confuse the children. Staff shall communicate updates with parents through the ProCare Application, especially if a separation shall occur.

In the event of an actual Fire, and/or Emergency Situation, the Director or Designee will Inform Parents As Soon As Possible through the ProCare Application, Text or Email. If the Situation lasts a long period of time, you will be contacted to pick up your child.

In the Event of an Emergency, the First Responsibility of Little Explorers Academy Staff is to move the Children and Staff to the Designated Safe Area Shown on the Exit Plans in Each Classroom near the Door or to One of the Designated Alternate Shelters.

The Designated Shelter is located at:

#### **Champion Forest Baptist Church**

- Website: [championforest.org](http://championforest.org)
- Phone: (281) 720-7207
- Address: 15555 Stuebner Airline Rd, Houston, TX 77069

***In all Emergency Events, Parents will be messaged through the ProCare Application***

The Children will be **Relocated to the Designated Safe Area** or if needed, the Designated Alternate Shelter with the Assistance of the Little Explorers Academy Staff. In the event Evacuation to the Designated Shelter becomes necessary, the Little Explorers Academy Vehicle and Personal Vehicle of Staff will be used. Each Teacher is Required to take the Student's Sign in Sheet for their classroom and Classroom Information Notebooks with them, so that all children can be accounted for and Recognized by Face to Name Practices. This information is stored on the teacher's tablet. Children under 18 Months of Age will be Relocated to the Designated Safe Area by using Evacuation Cribs for Infants, and with the Assistance of their Assigned Caregiver for Infants and Toddlers. Children who have limited mobility will be assisted appropriately by their assigned caregiver depending upon the individual needs of the child. Children who have mental, visual, or hearing impairments will be assisted appropriately depending upon their individual needs.

As indicated in your Enrollment Packet, you Authorize us to Contact, Emergency Personnel, to Transport your child to an Emergency Facility, and Authorize any doctor or hospital to render Emergency and Medical Care to your child, should it be needed.

Management will contact the local officials by calling 911 and/or 311 to alter the appropriate First Responders of the Need to Evacuate the Building. Management will work with First Responders to Determine the Best Way to Evacuate the Children from the premises. Parents will be Notified once the Children have been Relocated and are Safely Away from the Building, by using the Emergency Contact Information in the Classroom Notebooks. Texas Childcare Licensing will also be notified as soon as the Children are Determined safe by the First Responders and LEA Management.

An Emergency Evacuation Plan Diagram is in Each Classroom near the Classroom Entrance Door and the Exit Doors.

**In All Emergency Events, Parents will be Messaged through the ProCare app.**

In the event of a Medical Emergency, we will take appropriate Emergency Action, call 911, if Appropriate, and Notify You Immediately. It is Imperative that All Enrollment Forms Contain Current Contact Information, Emergency Medical Information, and Authorization for any Medical Treatment.

### DAILY HEALTH CARE CHECKS:

A Health Check is defined as a Visual or Physical Assessment of a Child to Identify potential Concerns about a Child's Health, including symptoms of illness and injury, in response to changes in the child's behavior since the last date of attendance.

The children will be observed at the time that they are dropped off at the school for the day. The teacher who is responsible for each student, will do the observation and will make notes of anything that is out of the ordinary and make the school's Administrative Staff aware of what has been noted. The Health Checks will be done both by visually observing the child, and by asking the parent(s) or guardian questions related to the child's appearance or demeanor. If a child is sick or injured, the parents or appropriate authorities will be notified. By the Center Staff as needed and required. All Staff will receive Annual Training on Minimum Standards of Childcare in Texas and will be trained on the rationale and procedures for performing the Health Checks. Many infectious diseases of concern in childcare have incubation periods of less than twenty-one days. Gathering this information may prove useful to Public Health Officials when they investigate Occasional Outbreaks.

### EMPLOYEE VACCINES:

I understand that Staff and Employees will monitor their Health Status and Comply with Approved Infection Control Standards, including, Protective Gear and Proper Hand Washing. LEA staff is not required to have any adult immunizations nor produce proof of such.



# Little Explorers Academy

## Family Policy Agreement

As a Little Explorer's Academy Parent and/or Guardian, I have received and reviewed the Little Explorer's Academy Family Handbook which includes 24 pages of policies and have fully Read the Document and Understand it in its Entirety.

I understand that Little Explorer Academy Policies and Procedures must be followed and that it is my responsibility to do my part.

The Little Explorer Academy staff wants to maintain a harmonious and safe environment for the children. Our goal is to bring about collaboration between the home and school in ways that enhance your child's development.

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Parent Print Name	Signature	Date
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Staff Print Name	Signature	Date
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List all Children's Names Enrolled

< **We are a Texas State Licensed #1687543 and Insured Childcare Facility** >

Thank you for being part of the Little Explorers Family.