



3/1/2025

# Family Handbook

***Serving Infants through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade***

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

**281-547-8989**

**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>	Thanksgiving Day
Black Friday	Christmas Eve, Christmas Day

**Early Closures Below – 1:00 p.m.:**

**Day Before Christmas Eve,**

**Day Before New Year's Eve**

**Wednesday before Thanksgiving**

**A Texas State Licensed and Insured Private School - #1687543**

# Welcome

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to **Little Explorers Christian Academy**, a **Premier Private School** where learning and faith come together!

We're so excited to have your child join our **Little Explorers Program!** Our goal is to create a warm, nurturing, and engaging environment where your child can learn, grow, and thrive. We truly believe that education is a partnership, and we want you to be an active part of your child's journey with us.

Please take a moment to review our **Family Handbook** and keep it handy for future reference. This guide outlines important policies and procedures designed to ensure a safe, structured, and enriching experience for all children in our care. As a **Texas Rising Star Accredited School with a 4-Star Rating**, we go beyond state guidelines to provide exceptional education and care.

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we embrace a **Christian-based curriculum**, celebrating Christian holidays while respecting all faiths. Our goal is to create an inclusive environment where every child feels valued and supported. As a **State Licensed and Insured Childcare Center**, we are committed to providing the highest quality care for your little one.

We're here for you! If you ever have questions, concerns, or just want to connect, please don't hesitate to reach out. We look forward to partnering with you and your family making this a wonderful experience for everyone!

With Gratitude and Warmest Regards,

*Mrs. DeAna Kindt*

Owner & Director Little Explorers Academy

**SECURITY NOTE:** All doors that open to the exterior of the building will always remain locked, both in the front and the back. Teachers and staff are instructed not to open these doors to anyone, as all visitors should enter through the front door, past the security desk to Sign-in or Sign-out. For All Volunteers, including parents, a background check and 10 hours of childcare training 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 premier educational environment for infants and children through Exploration of Learning; Through Faith in Christ, Love, and Learning, we aim to prepare children for a bright future while nurturing their hearts, minds, and spirits! **Our hours of Operation are for 12 Months: M-F, 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.**






### OUR GOALS and MISSION ARE TO DEVELOP THE WHOLE CHILD

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we are dedicated to nurturing the whole child—spiritually, academically, physically, socially, and emotionally. Our goal is to create a loving, faith-filled environment where children can grow, learn, and thrive.



#### SPIRITUAL GROWTH

-  Develop a love for **God, Jesus, and the Bible**.
-  Discover the **Wonder of God's Creations** in everyday life.
-  Receive **Biblical Teaching** to grow in faith and understanding of Jesus Christ.
-  Learn to **Honor Authority**, show kindness, and strive for excellence in all they do.
-  Practice sharing **God's Love** with those around them.





#### ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

-  Encourage **Independent Thinking** and curiosity.
-  Expand interests through **Hands-on Learning Experiences**.
-  Develop early **English and Spanish Language Skills**.
-  Explore **Basic Math and Science Concepts** and simple relationships.
-  Foster a lifelong **Love of Learning** through engaging activities.




#### PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

-  Establish **Healthy Habits** in hygiene, nutrition, and self-care.
-  Strengthen **Gross and Fine Motor Skills** for a secure environment.

#### SOCIAL SKILL

-  Learn to **Work and Play Cooperatively** with others.
-  Develop **Respect and Kindness** toward all individuals.
-  Foster a spirit of **Cooperation and Teamwork**.
-  Take responsibility for **One's Own Actions** and choices.

#### EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

-  Build a **Positive Self-image**, knowing they are loved and created by God.
-  Identify and understand **Different Emotions** in themselves and others.
-  Develop **Self-regulation Skills** to handle big emotions in a healthy way.

## Parent Communication & Open-Door Policy

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we believe in fostering a strong partnership with parents and families through open communication and collaboration. Our **Open-Door Policy** encourages parents and guardians to be actively involved in their child's early learning experience. Home reinforcement is critical to a developing child.

### Visiting the Academy

Parents are always welcome to visit and observe their children in our program. Short visits, preferably through the class window, are encouraged to allow you to see how your child interacts with teachers and peers. However, to ensure a positive and non-disruptive environment for all children, we ask that visits remain brief and observational. If a visit becomes upsetting to your child or others, we may request that you return later. For extended visits, special training and a background check are required.

### Sharing Important Family Events

We understand that significant events at home can impact a child's emotional well-being. Whether it's the loss of a pet, a family move, a grandparent's illness or death, or parental separation, we encourage parents to share these experiences with teachers. This allows us to provide the appropriate support and guidance for your child during the day. Any information shared will remain **strictly confidential**.

### Parent-Teacher Communication

We value ongoing conversations with parents regarding their child's progress and development. Our goal is to ensure that discussions about any concerns, challenges, or strategies for school readiness occur in a **private setting** rather than in the presence of children or in shared spaces. To give you our full attention, we kindly ask that meetings be scheduled in advance.

### Ways to Stay Connected and Notifications

We offer multiple avenues for communication to keep parents informed and engaged:

**ProCare App** – Daily updates, messaging, and important school-wide announcements

**Website & Parent Portal** – Access to policies, updates, and resources

**Email & Texts** – Direct communication with teachers and administration

**Check-in Computer, Clip Boards Outside Classroom & Information Boards** – Quick updates and reminders

**Newsletters & Notes Sent Home** – Stay informed on upcoming events and classroom activities

**Parent Conferences** – Held at least twice a year to discuss your child's progress or as requested.

### Updating Contact Information

To ensure you receive all important updates, please keep your contact information current. You can update your details anytime through our website, by emailing or through our administrative team:

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

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

 **Phone:** 281-547-8989

***We appreciate your partnership and look forward to working together  
to create a wonderful learning experience for your child!***

# Enrollment & Attendance Policies

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for every child. Below are our enrollment policies and expectations to ensure a smooth experience for all families.

## ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY

- ✓ We welcome children from **Newborn through 12 years old**, including school-aged children for **before and after-school care**.
- ✓ Infants under **6 weeks** may be enrolled on a **case-by-case basis** with written clearance from a doctor.
- ✓ We do not discriminate based on **race, color, religion, gender, political affiliation, or disabilities**.
- ✓ **Priority enrollment** is offered to **Little Explorers Academy employees' children**. All other enrollments are based on availability.
- ✓ **Part-time, temporary, or drop-in enrollments** are considered **on a case-by-case basis** and may not always be available.

## APPLICATION & ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

To enroll your child, the following **completed documents and items** must be submitted **before attendance**:

- ✦ **Application & Registration Packet and Completion of a Parent Orientation**
- ✦ **Food Program Participation Form**
- ✦ **Immunization Record**
- ✦ **Physician's Statement of Health**
- ✦ **Allergy & Medication Authorization Forms (if applicable)**
- ✦ **Vision & Hearing Screening (for ages 4 & 5)**
- ✦ **Copy of Social Security Card**
- ✦ **Statement of Special Needs (if applicable)**
- ✦ **Infant Feeding & Sleep Plan (if applicable)**
- ✦ **Authorization for Topical Items Application**

Once all documents are submitted, and registration fees are paid, the **childcare director** will determine admissions, classroom placement and start date. If space is unavailable, your child may be placed on a **waiting list** until an opening becomes available.

## WAITLIST POLICY

- ✦ When a classroom reaches its maximum capacity, a **waiting list** will be created.
- ✦ Applications for the waiting list will be **date-stamped** and processed **in order of submission** after the **registration fee** is paid.
- ✦ The childcare director will **contact families as space becomes available**.
- ✦ **No refunds** will be issued for holding a spot on the waiting list.

## PARENT EXPECTATIONS

As part of our **childcare and preschool program**, parents/guardians are expected to follow these policies to ensure a **safe and positive experience** for all children:

- ✓ **REPORTING ABSENCES:** Notify us via **email or the ProCare App** as soon as possible if your child is absent. A note from a doctor may be required to return to care.
- ✓ **AUTHORIZED PICK-UPS:** Only **parents, legal guardians, or designated persons listed on the Pick-Up Form** may pick up your child. A **Photo ID is required**. We do **not** accept phone calls or email requests to add/remove pick-up persons.
- ✓ **SIGN-IN & SIGN-OUT:** Parents must **properly sign in and out** their child daily and notify the center of absences via email, ProCare, or a phone call. Parents should be dressed **appropriately for a school** setting anytime they are on premises including drop-up and pick-up. Please no pajamas.
- ✓ **COMMUNICATION UPDATES:** Keep us informed of **changes to contact information, emergency contacts, health records, or authorizations** via **email or ProCare messaging**.
- ✓ **PERSONAL ITEMS:** Please **do not** send **toys, sippy cups, stuffed animals, jewelry, or other personal items** with your child unless requested by the teacher.
- ✓ **PRIVATE CONFERENCES:** If you have concerns regarding your child or another student, please schedule a **private meeting** with a staff member. We maintain **confidentiality** for all children and families. **Parent conferences are held twice a year** but can be scheduled at any time. Conferences are also available for academic and developmental updates, as needed or desired.
- ✓ **DROPPING OFF YOUR CHILD:** By 10:00 am and allow enough time to help your child **settle in, put away LABELED belongings, and share any important information** with staff.
- ✓ **NOTICE OF SCHOOL CHANGES:** Inform us at least **14 days or 2 Weeks in advance** if your child will be changing schools or leaving the program.

**IMPORTANT! Failure of ANY parents or guardians to abide by the above-mentioned policies can/will result in the children losing eligibility to attend Little Explorers Academy. Any acts of violence or perceivable threats can and will be reported to law enforcement immediately. The safety and protection of ALL the students in our care will always be top priority!**

## ATTENDANCE & TUITION POLICIES

- ✦ **Excessive absences** will be reviewed and may result in losing your child's classroom spot.
- ✦ **If your child is absent for 20+ days within 12 months, or 10+ consecutive days without notifying us,** enrollment may be terminated.
- ✦ **There are no refunds or tuition reductions for absences.** Each child is allowed **one tuition-free week per year**, but it must be used as a full week, not individual days. Additional weeks off will require **half tuition** payment to secure the child's classroom spot.
- ✦ If you **do not notify us** about withdrawing from the program, you will be responsible for **all tuition fees incurred** until proper notice is given.

## RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At **Little Explorers Academy (LEA)**, your child's safety is our top priority. We will only release your child to **you, or the approved individuals listed on your child's registration form**. To ensure accurate records, please **keep your authorized pick-up list up to date, at all times**, and notify the front desk in writing of any changes.

### **Pick-Up Authorization:**

- The **director or designee** has the discretion to approve alternative pick-ups upon a parent's request or not.
- If the individual picking up your child appears **impaired in any way**, we will **not** release your child into their custody. This includes parents. If this occurs, we are required to notify Child Protection Services.


### **Identification Requirement:**


- Anyone picking up your child **must present a valid photo ID**, such as a **driver's license**, and have a copy on file.
- If necessary, our staff may take **additional verification steps**, including contacting you before releasing your child. Please ensure we always have your **current contact information**.


## Personal Belongings & Clothing Guidelines

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we strive to create a safe, clean and organized environment for all children. To help ensure a positive experience, we ask that families follow our policies regarding personal belongings, clothing, and required school items.

### PERSONAL BELONGINGS

 **Do NOT bring** toys, sippy cups, jewelry, or other personal items from home. This helps prevent **lost, broken, or misplaced belongings** and avoids unnecessary conflicts between children.

 **Security items (pacifiers, etc.)** are allowed **for children under one year old** but must be **labeled with the child's first name and last initial** to prevent loss. **No stuffed animals or pacifier attachments with strings are allowed.**

 Parents of infants and toddlers (not potty trained) must provide **diapers, wipes, and ointments** for their child or will be charged \$2.00 per incident.

 Unauthorized items will be kept in the **Lobby** and will not be accessible to children during the school day.

◆ **Please LABEL all Clothing, Personal Items, Diapers, Pull-Ups, and Wipes with Your Child's First Name and Last Initial.**

### ITEMS NEEDED AT SCHOOL

**INFANT CLASSROOMS (Newborn to 17 Months): No Pacifiers Allowed after 12 months of age.**

- ✓ **Labeled Bottles** Must be pre-filled with formula or breast milk (**name on bottle tops as well as bottle**)
- ✓ **Labeled and Dated Baby Food**
- ✓ **Labeled Diapers & Wipes – Please Label Each Individual Diaper before drop off to avoid a mix-up.**
- ✓ **Labeled diaper rash cream** (Authorization form required)
- ✓ **Three (3) Changes of Clothing at All Times** in a zip-lock bag (Labeled)
- ✓ **Pacifier or Security item if Needed** (Labeled – no strings or stuffed animals attached)
- ✓ **Seasonally Appropriate Outerwear** (coats, hats, sweaters, etc.)

## 18 MONTHS TO 12 YEARS: No Pacifiers or Bottles are Allowed.

- ✓ Labeled Diapers, Pull-ups (**side-opening only**), and Wipes
- ✓ Three (3) Changes of Clothing, including socks & underwear
- ✓ Seasonally Appropriate Outerwear (coats, hats, sweaters, etc.)

Please **LABEL EVERY ITEM** brought from home with your child's **FIRST NAME** and **LAST INITIAL**. We cannot be responsible for any lost items that are **NOT LABELED**.

Example: John D.

## CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR GUIDELINES

👕 Children will **Engage in Active, Hands-on Activities** (painting, water play, sand play, etc.), so an extra change of clothes **must** be left at school. If your child is potty training, please provide **at least 3 changes** daily.

👟 **Close-toed shoes (tennis shoes/sneakers) are required** for safety. **Cowboy boots, sandals, flip-flops, and Crocs are not allowed** due to slipping risks on sidewalks and playground equipment. **Per State Regulations, shoes are required to stay on the child's feet and any infant who is walking is required to have shoes.**

☀️ Outdoor Time is part of our daily routine, so **CHILDREN MUST WEAR Seasonally Appropriate Clothing.**

## JEWELRY & ACCESSORIES

🚫 **Jewelry is NOT allowed** at school for safety reasons. Necklaces, bracelets, rings, and hair beads can pose **choking hazards** or may be lost or broken. **The center is not responsible for missing or damaged items.**

By following these guidelines, we ensure a safe, fun, and structured learning environment for all our Little Explorers! **Thank you for your cooperation.**

## FEE STRUCTURE: Tuition & Payment Policies

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we strive to maintain a structured and fair tuition system to support the quality of care and education we provide. Please review the following guidelines carefully.

### TUITION PAYMENTS

#### 💰 Payment Schedule:

Tuition is due **Weekly on Fridays** for the upcoming week or **on the First Day of Attendance Each Week**. Payment may be arranged **Daily, Weekly, or Monthly**, as agreed upon in writing.

\* **Weeks with school breaks must be paid on the last day of the prior week to avoid late fees.**

🚫 **No refunds** will be given for Absences, Holidays, Scheduled or Non-Scheduled School Closures.

### LATE OR UNPAID TUITION

#### ✖ Late Payment Fee:

If tuition is not received **by Monday, close of business (COB)**, a **\$25 late fee per week** will apply.

#### 🚩 Delinquent Accounts:

- Accounts **more than one (1) week pass due** may result in the child's **temporary withdrawal** until the balance is paid in full. **Spots are NOT guaranteed** if a child is withdrawn due to non-payment.
- Parents are responsible for **all outstanding tuition and fees.**



## LATE PICK-UP POLICY

 **Full-Time Tuition Covers up to 10 hours per day (Half-Day covers 6 hours).**

 **Late pick-ups will result in additional fees:**

- Beyond scheduled hours → \$15–\$20 per hour, per child
- After 6:00 PM → \$25 fee at 6:01 PM + \$1 per minute thereafter
- Every 15 minutes late → Additional \$25 fee

Note: If your child has not been picked up by 1 hour after closing and we have not heard from you, we are required to contact Child Protective Services.  
**PLEASE CALL IF YOU WILL BE LATE AT ALL TO PICK UP.**

◆ **Example Fee Breakdown for Late Pick-Up:**

Time	Fee
6:01 PM	\$25 + \$1 per min
6:15 PM	\$65
6:30 PM	\$105
6:45 PM	\$145
7:00 PM	\$185

 **Fees Double during Half-days or Holidays.**

**All late fees are due immediately before your child can attend again.**

## ADDITIONAL FEES

- ✦ **Registration Fee:** Are an **Annual, Non-Refundable Enrollment Fee** to secure a classroom spot.
- ✦ **Field Trips & Meals:** **Additional FEES** may apply for **field trips** or **non-compliance** with the food program.

## PAYMENT METHODS

- ✗ **No Checks Accepted.**
- ✓ Payments must be made via **Cash, ACH, Credit, or Debit.**

**Credit and Debit Cards used will be charged a 3% Convenience Charge Per Transaction.**

- ⊘ **No refunds will be issued.**

## VACATION & ABSENCES

 **Vacation Policy:**

- Parents must provide **at least two (2) weeks' notice** for planned vacations.
- Each student receives **one (1) tuition-free vacation week per fiscal year** after **six months of enrollment**.
- **Single-day absences do NOT count** toward vacation allowance.

### ✦ **Beyond the Allotted Vacation Week Annually:**

- Weekly absences will be charged **Half Weekly Tuition** to hold the child's spot.
- Tuition is **Annual and NOT Based on Attendance**; fees are still required for absences and school closures.
- **No Allowances, Credits, Refunds, or Make-up days.**

## DISCOUNTS

🏠 **Sibling Discount:** 5% off the **oldest** child's tuition when multiple children from the same family are enrolled.

👮 **First Responder & Educator Discount:** 5% discount for **First Responders, Teachers, and Military** (with ID).

💼 **Employee Discount:** Little Explorers Academy employees receive **50% off childcare** during active employment.

### 🚫 **Discounts do NOT apply to:**

- Application or Registration Fees
- Other Additional Fees
- If Tuition is **not paid in advance**
- No More than one discount per family

## REFUND & WITHDRAWAL POLICY

✦ **Tuition is non-refundable and non-transferable.**

✦ **No credits, reductions, or refunds will be given for:**

- Absences or Illness
- Holidays
- Unnotified or extended vacations
- Scheduled or Emergency School Closures

✦ If a child is withdrawn from the program, **no tuition refunds or credits** will be issued.

✦ A child may **not re-enter** Little Explorers Academy until **all outstanding tuition is paid in full.**

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. These policies help ensure that **Little Explorers Academy** can continue to provide a safe, high-quality learning environment for all children! 😊

## Hours of Operation & School Calendar

### REGULAR HOURS:

Little Explorers Academy is open **Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM** and open **12 months a year.**

We are **closed on Saturdays and Sundays.**

### 🕒 **Drop-Off Cut-Off Time:**

- The latest drop-off time is **10:00 AM.**
- If arriving later, please **notify us in advance via ProCare** so we can ensure proper staffing.

## Year-Round Operation & Holiday Closures:

Little Explorers Academy operates **12 months a year** and will be **Closed on the following Holidays:**

- **New Year's Eve & New Year's Day**
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
- **Presidents' Day**
- **Good Friday**
- **Memorial Day**
- **Juneteenth**
- **Independence Day**
- **Labor Day**
- **Columbus Day**
- **Thanksgiving Day & Black Friday**
- **Christmas Eve & Christmas Day**

## Holiday Scheduling:

- If a holiday falls on a **Saturday**, we will close on **the preceding Friday**.
- If a holiday falls on a **Sunday**, we may close on **the following Monday**.

## Tuition During Closures:

- Full tuition is **still required** to be paid during emergency closures, holiday closures and early dismissals.
- Tuition is **Annual, Not Based on Attendance** and will not be adjusted for school closures.
- A **fee schedule** can be provided upon request, including late pick-up charges.

## **PARENT'S NIGHT OUT (DATE NIGHT/MOTHER'S DAY OUT)**

### Occasional Saturday Evening Care

- **Available on select Saturdays (excluding holidays)**
- **Time:** 6:00 PM – 9:30 PM
- **Includes:** Childcare, dinner, movies, and activities
- **Cost:** Cash payment is required **in advance**
- **Sign-Up:** Spaces are limited; advanced registration is required

***This is a special program and is NOT included in regular tuition.***

## **BABYSITTING & PRIVATE CHILDCARE POLICY**

 **LEA Staff Are Strictly Prohibited** from providing private childcare or babysitting services outside of school.

- Staff and parents **May Not Exchange** personal contact information, including **Phone Numbers, Emails, Or Social Media Accounts**.
- **Violation Of This Policy May Result in Termination** of both the family's enrollment and the staff member's employment.

These policies help ensure a **SAFE, PROFESSIONAL, and SECURE ENVIRONMENT** for our children, families, and staff. Thank you for your cooperation!

## MEALS, SNACKS, & NUTRITION

At **Little Explorers Academy (LEA)**, we are committed to providing **nutritious meals and snacks** that support healthy growth and development.

### MEAL PROGRAM DETAILS

- ✅ **Included with Tuition:** Breakfast (**7:30-8:30 AM**), Lunch (**11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**), and **two to three snacks per day** are included in tuition **if the Food Program Packet is completed and returned annually**.
- ✅ **Failure to Submit the Food Program Packet Annually:** Parents will need to either **pay \$35.00 per week** for meals or provide **all meals and snacks** from home.
- ✅ **Meal Service:** Meals will be served in a **family-style dining manner** for children in **two-year-old classrooms and older**, when applicable.
- ✅ **Monthly Menu:** The **menu is available online** on our website, in the **lobby**, and on the **info board in the hallway**.

### INFANT NUTRITION

- 🍼 **Parents Must Provide:** Formula, breast milk, and appropriate baby food until the child is **ready for table food** and **Vitamin D milk**.
- 📄 **Feeding Plan:** A **written Feeding Plan** must be updated **monthly** and signed by a parent **for all children under 13 months** or until the child transitions to table food.

### PARENT-PROVIDED MEALS & SNACKS

If you choose to send meals or snacks from home:

- ⚠️ LEA is **not responsible** for nutritional value or meeting your child's dietary needs.
- 🚫 **Fast food and restaurant food are not allowed.**
- 🥗 All **food must be healthy** and stored in a **labeled container** that keeps it fresh and safe.
- 🚫 **No junk food will be given.**


### FOOD SAFETY & SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

- 🚫 **We are NOT a Peanut-Free Zone** – Please notify us of **any nut allergies**.
- 📄 **Special Diets & Substitutions:** A **written statement** from a **licensed physician or registered dietitian** is required for medical or dietary accommodations.
- 🥛 **Milk Substitutes:** Must be **store-packaged** and provided **weekly**. Parents will be notified when more is needed. **A list of approved substitutions is available.**
- 👤 **Food Allergies:** All staff receive **training on food allergies** and follow strict precautions to keep children safe.

### HYDRATION & BEVERAGES

- 💧 **Water is available throughout the day** and is offered **during meals, snacks, after physical activity, and upon request**. In addition, we have a water fountain inside and outside our building for use from the children.
- 🥛 **Milk is served with all meals** in accordance with **USDA guidelines**.

## SPECIAL OCCASIONS

 On **special occasions only**, children may be served:









- Fruit juice
- Lemonade
- Flavored water
- Cupcakes, cookies, and other treats

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we strive to promote **healthy eating habits** while respecting individual dietary needs and family preferences. If you have any questions or concerns regarding meals, please speak with the **Center Director**.

## CURRICULUM & ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we embrace a **multi-faceted curriculum approach** that blends **Frog Street, Reggio Emilia Inspired, Montessori Inspired, and STEAM-based Learning** to support each child's unique development. Our curriculum fosters **language and literacy, critical thinking, and hands-on learning** while emphasizing **social-emotional growth**.

Our program includes a variety of **Learning Enrichments**, such as:

-  **Music Appreciation**
-  **Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEAM)**
-  **Creative Arts**
-  **Spanish**
-  **Bible Study and Library Time**
-  **Fitness & Movement – Outdoors and Inside**
-  **Cooking & Nutrition**
-  **Gardening**

...and much more!

## CHILD-CENTERED LEARNING APPROACH and ASSESSMENTS

✓ **Placement by Ability, Not Age:** Children are placed in classrooms based on developmental readiness rather than age alone. Classroom promotions occur **as needed throughout the year**. **Parents cannot choose their child's classroom.**

✓ **Observation-Based Planning:** Teachers carefully observe children and **use developmentally appropriate practices** to tailor learning experiences to their needs.

✓ **Balanced Learning Environment:** We combine **child-directed and teacher-guided activities** to foster independence, creativity, and collaboration.

✓ **Assessments and Testing:** We use a Developmental Milestone Checklist, DECA Assessment, Circle Assessments, and the Pre-K Assessment to determine if early intervention is needed.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF OUR CURRICULUM

### Language & Literacy Development:

- Strong focus on **phonemic awareness, reading, and writing readiness**
- Activities include **singing, rhyming, storytelling, finger plays, and puppet play**
- Use of **big books, creative storytelling, and magnetic letters** to promote communication skills

### Mathematics Foundations:

- Engaging activities that develop skills in **sorting, ordering, counting, classifying, measuring, and estimating**
- Hands-on experiences like **pouring, building, and exploring patterns**

### Creative & Fine Arts Expression:

- Opportunities for **art, music, movement, and dramatic play**
- Hands-on activities including **painting, dancing, and sculpting**


### Social & Emotional Development:


- Focus on **friendships, self-esteem, and problem-solving skills**
- Encourages children to work both **independently and in small groups**


### Sensory & Motor Exploration:

- Activities such as **water play, playdough, woodworking, sand play, and movement-based learning**

## ASSESSMENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

 **Portfolios & Progress Tracking:** Teachers document children's growth through **portfolios, observations, and work samples** throughout the year.

 **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Families meet with teachers **at least twice a year** to discuss milestones and set goals for continued success.

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we are committed to **nurturing each child's curiosity, creativity, and love for learning** through a **holistic and engaging curriculum!** 

# DISCIPLINE & POSITIVE GUIDANCE POLICY

## Using the Conscious Discipline Method

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we recognize that preschoolers are still learning how to navigate social interactions. Balancing their own needs with those of their peers can be challenging, so our teachers use discipline as a **teaching opportunity** to help children develop appropriate social skills.

We focus on **Positive Discipline Techniques**, including:

- ◆ **Redirection** – Guiding children toward more appropriate behaviors.
- ◆ **Calming Strategies** – Encouraging children to "calm their bodies" before re-engaging.
- ◆ **Time in the Calming Area** – Providing a space to self-regulate.
- ◆ **Modeling Appropriate Behaviors** – Demonstrating problem-solving words and actions.
- ◆ **Adjusting the Environment & Routine** – Making modifications to better support children's needs.

If a child continues to struggle after multiple interventions, they may be temporarily removed from the group to **reset** in a quiet area under teacher supervision. If behavior remains **out of control** and is not corrected within a reasonable time, parents will be contacted, and the child may be sent home for the day.

## POSITIVE DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Our approach to discipline is:

- ✓ **Individualized & Consistent** – Tailored to each child's needs.
- ✓ **Developmentally Appropriate** – Adjusted to their level of understanding.
- ✓ **Focused on Teaching** – Encouraging self-control and acceptable behavior.

Our staff **only** uses **positive** discipline methods that support **self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction**, including:

- ✓ **Praising & Encouraging** good behavior instead of focusing on negative behaviors.
- ✓ **Clearly Stating Expectations** in a positive, age-appropriate manner.
- ✓ **Redirecting Behavior** with positive guidance.
- ✓ **Brief, Supervised Separation (if necessary)** – Limited to **one minute per year of age**.

## PROHIBITED DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

- ⊗ **Harsh, cruel, or unusual punishment is never allowed.** This includes:
  - ✗ **Physical Punishment** – No spanking, hitting, grabbing, or pulling.
  - ✗ **Food, Naps, or Toilet Training as Punishment** – No withholding or forcing.
  - ✗ **Verbal Abuse** – No yelling, humiliation, ridicule, or threats.
  - ✗ **Isolation or Confinement** – No locked rooms, dark areas, or restrictive devices.
  - ✗ **Excessive Restrictions** – No forcing a child to be silent or inactive for long periods.

## HANDLING BEHAVIOR CHALLENGES 🚦

If a child's behavior is inappropriate, they will:

1. Be **reminded of expectations** and redirected.
2. Be **given time to calm down** and reflect on their actions.
3. Receive **documentation of behavior concerns** if necessary.

If inappropriate behavior persists:

- ✦ A **teacher or administrator** will intervene and may request a parent conference.
- ✦ Parents will be notified **if a child cannot regain control**, even after calming strategies.
- ✦ If behavior **poses a safety risk** or significantly disrupts learning, suspension or expulsion may be considered.

### Behaviors that may require intervention include, but are not limited to:

- **Hitting, kicking, throwing objects, spitting, biting, verbal disobedience, scratching, pinching, Eloping or any disruptive/aggressive actions.**

If all efforts to correct behavior **fail**, the child may be **permanently withdrawn** from Little Explorers Academy at the discretion of the Director or designee.

## SUSPENSION, TERMINATION & EXPULSION POLICY

Families may be asked to **withdraw** from our program **without prior notice** for the following reasons:

- ✦ **Non-payment** of tuition, registration, supply, or late fees.
- ✦ **Failure to follow center policies & rules** by either parent or child.
- ✦ **Incomplete or missing records** required by the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services.
- ✦ **Repeated late pick-ups** of a child.
- ✦ **Aggressive or inappropriate behavior** by a **parent or child**, including:
  - **Biting, spitting, bullying, physical aggression, hitting, kicking, scratching, pinching, verbal abuse, eloping, or any form of violence or endangerment** toward children or staff.

If the center is unable to continue providing care, we will give **as much advance notice as possible**, though immediate closures may occur under certain circumstances.

At **Little Explorers Academy**, we strive to create a **safe, positive, and nurturing** environment where all children can **thrive, learn, and grow!** ❤️☀️



## OTHER POLICIES

### NAPTIME AND QUIET TIME

Little Explorers Academy is required to provide a supervised nap or rest period for all preschool children 18 months and older. Naptime/Quiet Time takes place from **12:00 PM to 2:45 PM** each day. We provide a clean, sanitized cot, sheet, and blanket for each child. Children who do not nap will be offered quiet activities. With parental approval, children aged 6–12 may use tablets during this time, but this is at the discretion of the administrator. To maintain hygiene, **we discourage bringing blankets and pillows from home for Sanitation.**

### BITING

Biting can occur in a preschool setting as children learn social skills. Our approach to handling biting includes **consistent communication** between staff and parents. We work with children to teach appropriate behaviors and address underlying causes. However, for the safety of all children, ongoing biting issues may result in **suspension or termination of care**. Parents are expected to support efforts to correct this behavior.

### ANIMALS/PETS AT THE CENTER

To ensure children's safety, our program follows childcare licensing guidelines regarding animals. Children **will not have contact with** chickens, ducks, reptiles (e.g., snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas), and amphibians (e.g., frogs, toads). Additionally, children will **not interact with unfamiliar or exotic animals** such as lions, monkeys, or tigers.

### BREASTFEEDING

Mothers have the right to **breastfeed or provide breast milk** while their child is in our care. A comfortable, quiet space, with water, an adult-size chair and foot stool are available for breastfeeding. Parents may request **breastfeeding education and community support resources** as needed.

### PEST CONTROL

Our center receives **monthly pest control services**. If you have any concerns, please speak with the Center Director.

### SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Little Explorers Academy maintains a **100% smoke-free environment** in compliance with local, state, and federal laws. Smoking is strictly prohibited **anywhere on the premises, including sidewalks and parked cars.**

### CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

LEA complies with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** and all relevant laws. We will make reasonable accommodation to support children with special needs and follow state guidelines when planning activities.

### APPEAL PROCESS

If you have concerns about discount eligibility, you may email [LittleExplorersKids@gmail.com](mailto:LittleExplorersKids@gmail.com) to request a review. All decisions are final. If financial circumstances change, families may reapply.

### SECURITY

The safety of our children, staff, and facility is our top priority. Our center is monitored with **indoor and outdoor security cameras, including audio recordings**. All staff and volunteers undergo **background checks**. The **front and back doors remain locked** to prevent unauthorized entry.

## VOLUNTEERS

Parents and volunteers are welcome in classrooms but must complete a **background check and 10 hours of required training** before participating. Volunteers are responsible for fingerprinting and training costs. Please schedule visits in advance with the administrator.

## PARKING LOT SAFETY

For the safety of all children, the **parking lot speed limit is 15 mph**. Please drive cautiously.

## OUTDOOR PLAY & WATER ACTIVITIES

Children receive many developmental benefits from outdoor and Inside play. At LEA children, including infants over six months, will play outdoors **twice daily for 30–60 minutes**, weather permitting. We follow **Childcare Weather Watch** guidelines (posted in hallways and online) to determine safe temperatures. When outdoor play is not possible, children will engage in active indoor play. **Our extreme temperatures are above 95 degrees and Under 40 degrees.**

During warm months, children may participate in **sprinkler play, wading pools, and other water activities**. Parents will receive advance notice and must provide **appropriate attire, water shoes, and a change of clothes**.

## TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

We follow strict transportation safety guidelines. **Children under 4 years old and 40 lbs. will not be transported without a proper car seat** (except in emergencies). Drivers follow **fixed routes and timeframes** and perform **safety checks before and after trips**. All vehicles are equipped with:

- ✓ Emergency Contact Lists and Medical Information on each Child
- ✓ First-aid kits & Fire Extinguisher
- ✓ Communication devices – Cell phone
- ✓ Licensed Drivers who have Completed Transportation Training, with a current Background Check

## FIELD TRIPS & TRANSPORTATION

Field trips may be offered for children **5 years and older**. Written permission is required for participation, and additional fees may apply.

## ELECTRONICS & CELL PHONES

Personal electronics, including cell phones, **are not allowed** at school. If brought, they will be kept at the front desk. LEA is **not responsible** for lost or stolen items. Exceptions apply for camp programs, where **children 6+ may bring a tablet** with parental approval.

## SCREEN TIME POLICY

Screen time is limited to **educational activities only**. Children **over two years** may have **up to one (1) hour per day**. Children **under two** will **not have screen time**. In the evenings (after 5:00 PM), **screen time may be allowed for relaxation**.

## BIRTHDAYS

We love celebrating birthdays! Please coordinate with staff **at least one week in advance**. We encourage **non-food items** for celebrations, but if they bring treats, they must be **commercially packaged with ingredient labels** to accommodate allergies.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

We take privacy seriously. Personal information is **not shared** unless required by law or necessary for child safety. Parents should also respect the confidentiality of other families.

## INTERVIEWS & RECORD INSPECTIONS

Licensing agencies, Child Protective Services, and law enforcement may conduct **interviews with children and staff**, inspect records, and observe classrooms as needed. You will be notified if this occurs.

## CUSTODY & VISITATION

LEA follows **court orders and legal agreements** regarding custody and visitation. No child will be released to an unauthorized person. A **court order is required** to prevent a parent from picking up their child. Staff may refuse release if they suspect a child's safety is at risk (e.g., due to intoxication). If necessary, law enforcement will be contacted.

## POLICY CHANGES

LEA reserves the right to **modify policies and procedures** at any time. Parents will receive written notification of changes. For questions, please contact the Center Director.

## MEDIATION & ARBITRATION

If a dispute arises, parents agree to first attempt **mediation** with a mutually agreed-upon third party before pursuing legal action.

## PHOTOS & VIDEO RECORDINGS

By enrolling at LEA, you consent to your child being **photographed, videotaped, or recorded** for educational or promotional purposes, including social media. Parents may opt out in writing. Licensing staff may access footage as required.

## HEALTH & SANITATION

We prioritize cleanliness to prevent the spread of illness. Children are encouraged to **wash their hands frequently** as part of their daily routine.

## GANG-FREE ZONE

Under **Texas Penal Code**, the area **within 1,000 feet of our facility** is designated as a **Gang-Free Zone**, where criminal activity incurs **enhanced penalties**.

## CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY

LEA ensures that all children's products meet safety standards. Parents can check the **Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website** for recall updates ([www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)). Notices will also be posted in our lobby.

## INFANT SAFE SLEEP POLICY

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 have nothing in their cribs.

# Health & Illness Policy

At **LEA**, we strive to maintain a **healthy environment** for all children. If your child becomes ill at school, they will be provided with a **rest area** until you arrive. **Sick children must be picked up within one (1) hour** of notification.

## Exclusion from School Due to Illness 🚫

A child **must stay home** if they:

- ✅ Are unable to **participate comfortably** in activities, including outdoor play.
- ✅ Require more care than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of others.

## SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS & CONDITIONS REQUIRING EXCLUSION:

- **Fever:**
  - Ear temperature **100°F or higher**
  - Armpit temperature **is 100°F or higher**
  - Infrared forehead temperature **101°F or higher**
  - Oral temperature **101°F or higher**
  - Must be fever-free for **24 hours** without medication before returning.
- **Severe symptoms** such as unusual lethargy, persistent crying, or difficulty breathing.
- **Diarrhea:** One or more uncontained incidents; must be symptom-free for **48 hours** without medication before returning.
- **Vomiting:** Two or more episodes within 48 hours; must be symptom-free for **48 hours** before returning.
- **Contagious conditions** such as mouth sores, drooling, rash with fever, or any **communicable disease**.

### Daily Health Checks:

LEA staff **conduct daily health checks** upon arrival and throughout the day. Any concerns will be documented in **ProCare**.

### Temperature Screening:

We use a **forehead (infrared) thermometer** only. Oral, ear, armpit, and rectal temperature readings will not be used.

## EMPLOYEE HEALTH & VACCINATION POLICY

- **LEA employees monitor their health** and follow infection control standards.
- **Staff are not required** to have adult immunizations or provide proof of vaccination.

## CONDITIONS THAT REQUIRE EXCLUSION

Children **must stay home** if diagnosed with any of the following until cleared by a medical professional and approved by LEA administration:

### **Bacterial & Viral Infections:**

- Strep throat (24 hours after treatment begins)
- Impetigo (24 hours after treatment begins)
- Chickenpox (6 days after rash appears or until lesions are crusted over)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella
- Whooping cough (Pertussis)
- COVID-19 and any variants
- Influenza (Flu), Meningitis
- Tuberculosis (must be cleared by the local health department)

### **Gastrointestinal & Parasitic Infections:**

- E. coli, Salmonella, Campylobacter, Cryptosporidiosis
- Pinworm, Ringworm (24 hours after treatment)
- Hepatitis A
- Shigella

## Skin & Eye Conditions:

- **Pink eye with discharge (Conjunctivitis):** May return 24 hours after treatment and symptoms have resolved.
- **Head lice or scabies:** Child must be nit-free and checked by staff before returning.
- **Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease** (until blisters have healed)
- **Unexplained Rashes**

✦ **A medical clearance letter does not guarantee immediate return—final approval rests with the LEA administration.**

## CONDITIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE EXCLUSION

- ✓ Children with **no symptoms** but who test positive for non-contagious bacteria or viruses.
- ✓ Children with **clear, watery eye discharge** (without fever, redness, or pus).
- ✓ Children with a **rash** but no fever or behavioral changes (must have doctor clearance).
- ✓ Children with **clear nasal discharge** (yellow/green discharge may indicate infection and require exclusion).

## LICE & NO-NIT POLICY - Zero Tolerance for Lice 🚨

- Staff **may check** students for lice at any time.
- If lice or nits (eggs) are found, the child will be **sent home immediately**.
- **Return policy:**
  - Child must be **completely nit-free**.
  - Must be **cleared by staff or a doctor's note**.

## IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

LEA follows **Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services** immunization guidelines.

### ✦ Enrollment Requirements:

- Children **must be up to date** on required vaccinations according to the **Texas Department of Health** guidelines.
- Immunization records **must be validated by a physician** and include:
  - Child's name and date of birth
  - Type and number of doses received
  - Date (month/day/year) of each vaccine
- **Provisional Enrollment:** Children may attend for **up to 5 days** with written proof of at least **one dose per required vaccine series** and a schedule for completing the series.

### ✦ Exemptions:

- **Medical exemption** (requires a doctor's note).
- **Religious exemption** (requires a notarized affidavit).
- Exemptions **do not apply during outbreaks** of vaccine-preventable diseases.

### **Parent Responsibilities:**

- Keep **immunization records updated**.
- Provide a **new physical and immunization record** after every doctor's visit.

 **More information:** Visit the [Texas Department of Health Immunization Website](https://www.dhs.texas.gov/immunization).

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE NOTIFICATIONS**

If an **employee or child** at LEA **contracts a reportable communicable disease**, we may notify parents while maintaining **confidentiality as required by law**.


### **Parent Cooperation:**

- If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, please **notify us immediately**.
- We will only share the necessary information with those legally required to know.

## **MEDICATIONS, SUNSCREEN, AND INSECT REPELLENT**

When bringing prescribed medication to the school for your child, you must complete a **Permission to Administer/Apply** form. All medications must have a **current expiration date** and, in the case of a prescription, must be specifically prescribed to the child. **Little Explorers Academy will not administer medication or apply these items if they are prescribed or assigned to anyone else. We cannot apply Sunscreen or Bug Repellent.**

### **Guidelines for Bringing Prescribed Medications to the School:**

 **Prescription medications** must be in the **original container** and accompanied by:

- A **written physician's note**
- A **parent's written permission** to administer or apply the medication

 **The label must include the following information:**

- **Child's name** and **recent date**
- **Specific dosage/application directions** and the times to be given or applied
- **Physician's name** and **expiration date**

 **Prescription medications must be administered exactly as directed on the label.**

If the label states to "consult a physician" for a particular age range, written instructions from a doctor must be obtained.

**Over-the-counter medications may only be given on a case-by-case basis or in the event of an emergency. We do not accept open-ended directives from parents to administer medications, including sunscreen and insect repellent.**

**Note:** Medications must be stored in a **locked storage area** for safety. They **cannot** be left in a child's cubby, backpack, or diaper bag. Please give any medications directly to the childcare staff for proper storage. Any expired or abandoned medications will be disposed of accordingly.

## VISION & HEARING SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

Little Explorers Academy is required to abide by the **Vision & Hearing Screening Requirements** set forth by the **Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services**.

### Screening Requirements:

✦ The **Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act** (Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36) requires a **vision and hearing screening** or a **professional examination** for the following children enrolled in a childcare center:

- **First-time enrollees** who are **four (4) years of age or older**
- **All children enrolled in programs who turn four (4) years old by September 1**
- Screening must be completed within **120 calendar days** of enrollment or prior to the end of the first semester, whichever is longer
- **Children in 1<sup>st</sup> grade** must also complete a screening within the school year

✦ A **licensed or certified screener** or **healthcare professional** must conduct the screening. Refer to **Texas Health and Safety Code 36.011** for specifics. More information can be accessed at: [www.tdh.state.tx.us/vhs](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/vhs)

✦ Little Explorers Academy must keep one of the following on file for each child required to be screened:

- A copy of the individual vision and hearing screening results, **OR**
- A **signed statement from the parent** stating that the screening records are current and on file at another school or program. The statement must be dated and include the name, address, and telephone number of the school.

## TUBERCULOSIS (TB) TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Tuberculosis testing requirements vary by state and region. Our **Regional Health Department** does not require **TB testing** for children or staff in our center currently.

## ALLERGIES AND EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTORS

Please **inform the Center Director and your child's classroom teacher** of any known allergies. If your child requires **life-sustaining medication**, you must:

- ✦ **Complete and sign the "Consent Waiver and Release to Administer Prescription Medication" form**
- ✦ Provide **written instructions from your child's physician** on the **F.A.R.E. (Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care) form**
- ✦ Include **specific precautions to avoid a reaction** and **detailed steps to follow in case of an allergic reaction**

### Food Allergies:

- A monthly **menu** is posted in the **front lobby** and on our website: [www.LittleExplorersKids.com](http://www.LittleExplorersKids.com)
- If your child requires **alternative food choices**, a **written plan** must be submitted to the school.

- **Little Explorers Academy does not provide or maintain unassigned epinephrine injectors on-site.** Parents must provide their child's epinephrine injector if necessary.

**Parents are responsible for maintaining EpiPens and other medications including making sure they are not expired**

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

At **Little Explorers Academy**, the safety of our children and staff is our top priority. We follow the protocols outlined in our **Emergency Procedure Manual**, including **fire drills, evacuations, lockdowns, and tornado drills**.

- **Monthly fire drills** and **quarterly lockdowns and severe weather drills** are conducted and documented.
- Our **Evacuation Plan** is posted on the **Information Board** for your review.
- Each classroom has an **evacuation route** posted, showing two exit options.
- **Communication during emergencies** will be conducted through the **ProCare application**, as internet or landline services may not always be available.

**Important:** If a drill is in progress, please **do not interrupt the process, enter the building, or drive through coned-off areas**.

## MANAGING ILLNESS & MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

### Mild Illness Procedures:

If a child appears **mildly ill**, the following steps will be taken:

- ✓ The **school director or designee** will notify parents, providing details on the child's symptoms and reviewing school participation policies.
- ✓ The child will be cared for separately from others, typically with a **rest mat in a quiet area** of the classroom.
- ✓ The child **must be picked up within one (1) hour** of parent notification.

Some communicable diseases must be reported to public health authorities. A **list of reportable diseases** is available in the **Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Childcare Centers** at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us). If a child's physician diagnoses a **reportable disease**, parents must inform the center director. **When a contagious illness (e.g., flu, chickenpox) is identified in a class**, a notice will be posted on the bulletin board, and parents will be informed via the **ProCare application**. **A child's identity will remain confidential.**

### Medical Emergencies:

If a child requires **immediate medical attention**, we will:

- ✓ **Call an ambulance if necessary** or transport the child to their **listed urgent care center** for evaluation.
- ✓ **Contact the parents immediately.**
- ✓ Immunization records must include the **healthcare provider's original signature or stamp.**



## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, INCLEMENT WEATHER & EVACUATION

Little Explorers Academy conducts **monthly fire drills and emergency evacuation drills** without prior notice. If you are **inside the building or parking lot during a drill**, please follow all procedures and evacuate with the children. **Do not disrupt the drill, as it may confuse the children.**

**Communication During Emergencies:** Updates will be sent to parents via the **ProCare Application**.

### Actual Emergency Situations:

In case of a **fire or other emergency**, parents will be **notified as soon as possible** via **ProCare, text, or email**. If the situation is prolonged, parents may be asked to **pick up their child**. The **primary responsibility** of staff is to **move children to the designated safe area** or an alternate shelter if necessary.

### DESIGNATED SHELTER:

**Klein Volunteer Fire Department - Station 7**

**19302 T.C. Jester Blvd., Klein, TX 77379**

**Phone: 281-607-4660**

- ✓ If evacuation to the designated shelter is necessary, **staff members may use personal vehicles** if needed.
- ✓ Each **teacher is responsible** for bringing their **classroom's sign-in sheet** and **student information notebook** for accurate headcounts, which is located on their classroom tablet.
- ✓ **Infants & children under 18 months** will be transported using **evacuation cribs**, assisted by their assigned caregivers.
- ✓ Children with **limited mobility or special needs** will receive appropriate assistance.
- ✓ As stated in your **Enrollment Packet**, parents authorize **emergency personnel** to **transport their child to a medical facility** and permit doctors to administer necessary emergency care.
- ✓ **Management will contact local emergency officials by dialing 911 or 311** and coordinate evacuation efforts with first responders.
- ✓ **Parents will be notified once children are safely relocated**, using the emergency contact details provided in enrollment forms.
- ✓ **Texas Childcare Licensing will also be notified** once all children are deemed safe.

***Emergency Evacuation Plan diagrams are posted near the entrance and exit doors of each classroom.***

## LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES & INTRUDER RESPONSE

In the event of a **lockdown or security threat**, the Director or Designee will:

- ✦ Notify **all classrooms** to initiate **lockdown procedures**.
- ✦ **Communicate with parents** via the **ProCare Application, text, or email** as soon as possible.
- ✦ **Conduct quarterly lockdown drills** to ensure staff and students are prepared.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Ensure all contact and emergency information is up to date on your child's enrollment forms.  
During drills or actual emergencies, please follow all procedures and do not interfere with evacuation efforts.

Communication will be through the ProCare app—PLEASE ENSURE NOTIFICATIONS ARE ENABLED.

### Your Child's Safety Is Our Top Priority!

If you have any questions regarding our **Emergency Preparedness Plan**, please speak with the **Center Director**.

## PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

At **Little Explorers Academy (LEA)**, the safety and well-being of every child is our highest priority. Texas law requires all caregivers, including **LEA staff**, to report **any suspected child abuse or neglect** to the **Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)** or local law enforcement. In additions, we receive annual training on abuse, and neglect of children.

### Mandatory Reporting:

All employees receive **annual training** on recognizing and reporting abuse and neglect.

**Daily Health Checks:** Every teacher conducts a **daily health check** on each child and **documents findings** to ensure their well-being.

### WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Recognizing the **warning signs** of child abuse or neglect is crucial. The following behaviors or physical signs may indicate a child is at risk:

#### Physical Abuse:

- ✓ Unexplained **bruises, welts, or burns**
- ✓ Withdrawn, fearful, or **extreme behaviors**
- ✓ Injuries that appear **in clusters** or in places where children **don't usually get hurt**

#### Sexual Abuse:

- ✓ Difficulty **walking or sitting**
- ✓ **Pain, itching, bruises, or bleeding** in the genital area
- ✓ **Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing**
- ✓ Unusual knowledge or **inappropriate sexual behavior**
- ✓ Frequent **urinary tract infections (UTIs)** or **yeast infections**

## Emotional Abuse:

- ✓ **Speech disorders** or delays in emotional and intellectual growth
- ✓ **Social withdrawal, extreme behavior, or sleeping problems**
- ✓ Difficulty engaging in play as most children do

## Neglect:

- ✓ **Lack of medical or dental care**
- ✓ **Chronically dirty, unbathed, or malnourished**
- ✓ **Frequent absences or lack of supervision**
- ✓ **Unsafe living conditions, exposure to drugs or alcohol**
- ✓ **Self-destructive behaviors**



## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

The **warning signs of abuse and neglect** are posted at the **daycare entrance** and included in this **Family Handbook**. Additional resources are available upon request.

- ✓ A **flyer on reporting abuse, neglect, or exploitation** is posted at the entrance.
- ✓ Parents are encouraged to seek help by **speaking with an LEA staff member** or contacting a **local community agency** listed on the information board.

**If you suspect a child is a victim of abuse or neglect, contact:5**

☎ **Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline: (800) 252-5400** (Available 24/7, nationwide)

🌐 **Online Reporting:** [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)

🚓 **Local Law Enforcement or 911** (for immediate danger)

👤 **Speak with an LEA staff member for guidance**

**At Little Explorers Academy, we are committed to creating a safe, nurturing environment, both at school and home, where every child can thrive.**

**If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.  
We do have access to local domestic violence resources.**

## **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**.

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 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)**



# PARENT'S RIGHTS

A parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to

Enter and examine the child-care facility during its hours of operation and without advance notice;

File a complaint against the child care facility;

Review the child care facility's publicly accessible records;

Review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;



Receive inspection reports and information about how to access the child care facility's online compliance history;



Have the facility comply with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child;

Be given the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office;



Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that:



Video recordings of the alleged incident are available;

The parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and

The parent or guardian of any other child in the video receives prior notice from the facility;



Obtain a copy of the facility's policies and procedures handbook;

Review the facility's staff training records and any in-house training curriculum; and

Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the facility.



The child care facility must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in a video before allowing a parent to inspect a recording.

The child care facility must provide a parent or guardian with a written copy of the rights no later than the child's first day at the facility.