



19433 TC Jester Blvd., Building C, Spring, TX 77379

281-547-8989

www.LittleExplorersKids.com

Family Handbook

Closed Little Explorers Academy Holidays:

New Year's Day	Good Friday
Memorial Day	Independence Day
Labor Day	Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Eve	Christmas Day

A Texas State Licensed and Insured Childcare Center

WELCOME

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to Little Explorers Academy and Child Care Center.

We are pleased that you have enrolled your child in our 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 a number of policies concerning program and classroom practices. These guidelines have been developed to comply with state child care licensing and for the safety and well-being of your child. The policies and procedures described in this booklet are written to provide a clear description of what parents/guardians may expect of Little Explorers Academy and what Little Explorers Academy expects of parents/guardians. Our goal is to provide exemplary child care services to your child(ren).

Little Explorers Academy is a Christian-Based Educational Program. We will 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.

Respectfully,

DeAna

Owner/Director

281-547-8989

OPEN DOOR POLICY: The Little Explorers Academy Center has an Open-Door Policy. Parents/Guardians may visit the child care classroom at any time during the day without securing prior approval. We ask that parents/guardians do not enter their children's rooms 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 remain locked at all times. 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, STEAM, proper use of the English language, 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 and Saturday - 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Closed on Sundays. The Little Explorers Academy operates 12 months a year, 357 days and will be closed for the following holidays: **New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day.** If the Holiday falls on a Saturday, the center MAY be closed the preceding Friday; if the Holiday falls on a Sunday, we MAY be closed the following Monday. Full Tuition will still be charged. 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. A fee schedule will be written for you and will include charges for late pick-up.

ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY:

- ✓ Little Explorers Academy will enroll children Infants 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 who are legal guardians of young children, and currently-enrolled students who have young children have first priority for enrolling their children in Little Explorers Academy. Others may enroll as space is available. Part-time enrollment and temporary enrollment or Drop-in will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Contact staff to discuss special enrollment arrangements.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE:

To enroll a child at Little Explorers Academy, complete a Registration Packet and required accompanying documents (Immunization Record, Physician Statement of Health, Vision & Hearing Screening, Topical Items Authorization, Medication Authorization, Statement of Special Needs, Instructions for Infants, a Feeding Agreement and Authorization for Diaper Items, then submit it to the director or designee with the appropriate registration fees. The child care director or designee will review the class lists to determine when enrollment will be possible. 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.

COMMUNICATION - UPDATES of INFORMATION – PARENT CONFERENCE PROCEDURE:

Parents will be notified by Email, Text, Sign-in Computer, and the LifeCubby Application. To update Personal Information, address, phone number, etc. or to request a Parent Conference, please email us at: LittleExplorersKids@gmail.com

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. The child care director or manager will monitor the waiting list and contact the next person on the list as space becomes available.

MEALS AND SNACKS:

Monthly tuition includes breakfast (8:00-8:30), lunch (11:00-12:30) and two to three snacks per day. We will serve meals in a “Family Style” dining manner in our two-year-old classrooms and older, if applicable. A monthly menu will be provided online through our website and posted in the lobby. Parents of infants must provide formula or breast milk and appropriate baby food until the child is able to eat "table food." A written food plan will be completed monthly for all children under 13 months. 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.

- ✓ A Monthly Menu will be posted on Bulletin Board and on the Website.
- ✓ We are **NOT** a “**Peanut-FREE Zone.**” So please advise of ALL Peanut Allergies.
- ✓ If your child requires a Special Diet for medical purposes, we must have a written statement from a licensed physician or registered/licensed dietician 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. We will always have available a meal, milk, fresh fruit and vegetables to your child even on the day’s food is brought from home.
- ✓ All staff are trained on food allergies and take precaution to ensure children are protected.
- ✓ Water will be offered during each meal, snack and throughout the day or evening. Milk will be offered during all meals.
- ✓ On special occasions, your child will be served fruit juice, lemonade or flavored water.
- ✓ Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach of children.
- ✓ Healthy snacks (as listed by the Texas Department of Agriculture) are available for school aged children as children arrive.
- ✓ Food brought into the program to be shared among children shall be commercially prepared or prepared in a kitchen inspected by health officials.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS:

Your child should not bring toys from home. This policy prevents hurt feelings and lost 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, such as a pacifier, blanket, or stuffed animal. These items must be labeled 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.

ITEMS NEEDED AT SCHOOL:

INFANT AND TODDLER CLASSROOMS:

- ✓ Labeled (First Name and Last Initial) and filled bottles
- ✓ Labeled (First Name and Last Initial) caps for bottles
- ✓ Baby food, labeled (First Name and Last Initial) and dated
- ✓ Labeled (First Name and Last Initial) Sippy Cups
- ✓ Diapers
- ✓ Wipes
- ✓ Diaper rash cream (Form to Apply must be Signed)
- ✓ Blanket, not for crib use, if needed
- ✓ 2-3 changes of clothing
- ✓ Security items/pacifiers (labeled- First Name and Last Initial)
- ✓ Appropriate outer-wear such as coats, sweaters and sweatshirts

2 YEAR CLASSROOMS TO 12 YEARS:

- ✓ Any items needed above
- ✓ One stuffed animal, doll, or other "security item" for nap, *if needed*
- ✓ Blanket and small pillow (not a bed-size pillow, please), *if needed*
- ✓ Change of clothing, including socks and underwear (Swimming suit on Friday or other days as Specified, when weather permits for Water Days.)
- ✓ Appropriate outer-wear such as coats, sweaters and sweatshirts

CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES:

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

Each child, once mobile, 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 allowed 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.

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

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS USING THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM:

Assisting parents with child care arrangements underscores Little Explorers Academy dedication to the education of all students in the area. All parents utilizing the child care program are expected to abide by the following policies at all times:

- ✓ 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 Parent Portal or Fill Out an Absence Request Form located at the Front Desk.
- ✓ Only the legal custodial parent, grandparent or guardian, who is listed on the Pick-Up Form will be allowed to pick up the child except in emergency situations. Emergency contact persons must be listed on the child's registration form. Identification will be required before the child will be 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 health and immunization records and authorization to secure medical assistance.

- ✓ 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 daycare is kept confidential. We expect you to keep the information confidential as well. All parents may request a conference at any time
- ✓ 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 10 calendar days after any change in school, you will inform Little Explorers Academy staff and the child care director or designee.
- ✓ In advance or as soon as possible after the change occurs, you will inform Little Explorers Academy staff and the child care facility about changes in residence, telephone number, emergency contact information, health or child care arrangements.
- ✓ If you do not notify Little Explorers Academy staff that you are no longer attending school, you will be responsible for paying all child care 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 approval during the next 3-month cycle. There will be no refunds for absences.

Also, your child care 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 in writing.

**CURRICULUM USED – MONTESSORI, REGGIO ÉMILIA, STEAM-BASED:
Enrichments – Music Appreciation, Science, Technology, Engineering, Creative Arts,
Mathematics, Spanish, Bible, Fitness, Cooking 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.

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;
- ✓ 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 and other hands-on activities.

Assessment of children's learning is essential to appropriate planning. 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 child care staff will meet with parents to discuss children's individual milestones achieved and to set goals for continued success.

DISCIPLINE AND POSITIVE GUIDANCE:

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, time out 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 must 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.

A caregiver 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 must 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) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- 4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- 5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- 6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- 7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- 8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed or open; and
- 9) 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 the daycare will have that behavior pointed out to him/her, and the reason why this behavior is inappropriate will be explained. After one warning, discipline will follow. Time out is the preferred form of childcare discipline at our preschool facilities. Time out will consist of the child being placed in an area isolated from the other children, yet still in the same preschool classroom.

Any inappropriate activity that still persists after this will be addressed with the director and possibly a conference will be set up with the parents. Parents will be notified at the time of inappropriate behavior does not stop after time out and a visit to the director. We will work with the parents and child to correct any inappropriate behavior.

***If after all options are tried, and satisfactory improvement is not noted, the child may be asked to leave Little Explorers Academy as a final measure, at the discretion of the director.**

TERMINATION POLICY:

Family's may be asked to withdraw from the program for the following reasons:

- Delinquency in the Tuition or Supply Fee Payment.
- The child is unable to follow center's policy and rules.
- Parent's fail to provide 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 or Verbal Abuse of other Children or Staff.

PARENT 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 welcome at all times to visit the program and participate in all activities of the program. 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.

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 challenging behaviors. Conversations shall be framed around school readiness and the objective 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 to discuss issues and concerns that may arise in the course of a child's enrollment rather than discussing concerns in the presence of children or other observers in the classroom. We want to give you our undivided attention and this is not possible when the teachers are responsible for children.

The Child Care staff strives to provide many avenues of communication with all parents. Please feel free to utilize voice mail, email and written notes as methods of communicating with your child's teacher. 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 Parent Portal 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 the child care director/manager. Changes to policies and/or procedures affecting the child care 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 child care director is available to discuss the policies and procedures of the program and parents are invited to share their comments or concerns.

- ✓ Information Bulletin Boards, Website Parent Portal, LifeCubby App
- ✓ Check-in Computer, Email, Telephone
- ✓ Parent Conferences
- ✓ 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, Lock-downs and Tornado Drills. We will conduct Monthly Fire Drills and Quarterly Lock-downs 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 34 for evacuation route and location. Communications shall take place through our LifeCubby application.

CHILD CARE 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 Child Care Centers is available for review at www.HHSC.state.tx.us.

As a parent or guardian with a child enrolled in the child care, 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 child care. To review these documents, please contact the center director or designee.

From time to time the child care is required to post such inspections in an obvious location for parents to review. Should this be the case, the child care director will post the appropriate inspections on the bulletin board nearest the entrance to the child care facility.

Contact Information for Parents:

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (local office)

www.HHSC.state.tx.us/

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

NAPTINE 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 during 12:00 to 2:30 PM, each day. We will provide a clean, sanitized cot, sheet and blanket for each child. You may provide a personal blanket and small pillow, but All Items need Labeled. Quiet activities will be offered in place of sleeping, if needed. 6-12 year old's may play on tablets during this time.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN:

Little Explorers Academy will not release your child to anyone other than you or the person(s) you list in your child's file. Make sure your list is up-to-date at all times and that you notify the front desk and your child's teacher in writing of any changes.

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 child care 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 reach you at all times.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS:

If your child becomes ill at school, he or she will be given a sleeping mat and placed in a quiet room 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 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.
- ✓ The illness results in a need for greater care than the child care 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.

- ✓ Armpit temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
- ✓ Oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; or

Should LEA Staff identify the need for any Health Checks, Parents will be informed 48 hours prior unless it provides for an Emergency Health Issue in the Center or any Classroom. In this case, we will perform the Health Check and notify the parents at pick-up that day.

NOTE: Little Explorers Academy will take children's temperatures under the arm. Oral and rectal methods for taking temperatures will not be used.

- ✓ 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 24 hours.

- ✓ Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 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 24 hours.
- ✓ Mouth sores with drooling unless the child's physician or local health department authority states the child is non-infectious.
- ✓ Rash with fever or behavior change, until a physician has determined the illness not to be a communicable disease.

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. 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 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
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Any Other Disease or Illness Exclusion from a Group Care in Accordance with State Child Care or Health Department Regulations.

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.

Children cannot enter the Center if they have any symptoms of Any Communicable Disease and May Not Return until they are No Longer Contagious. 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.
- ✓ 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 group care.

PROCEDURE FOR MANAGEMENT OF ILLNESS:

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 should 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 Child Care Centers. A complete copy of the Minimum Standard Rules is available for review online at 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 note 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 must be kept up-to-date and documented at the child care. 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 affidavit 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:

When you bring medication to the child care for your child, you will be asked to complete a “Permission to Administer Medicine” form. Childcare licensing requires that medications 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 that has been prescribed to anyone else. The following guidelines must be followed when bringing medications to the school:

1. Both prescription and over-the-counter medications must be in the original container and Accompanied by a Written Physician’s Note.
2. The label must include the following information:
 - Date
 - Child’s name
 - Specific directions for dosages and times to be given
 - Physician’s name (if prescription medication)
 - Expiration Date

3. Medications 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 can help guide you in the proper procedures for this. Child Care staff may administer over-the-counter medications on a case by case basis only. *We will not accept open-ended directives from parents to administer medications.*

Note: Medications are stored in labeled storage areas that are locked. It is unsafe to leave medications in your child's cubby or diaper bag. Please ask for assistance from the child care staff for proper storage of medications.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS:

Little Explorers Academy is required to abide by the Immunization Guidelines set forth by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. The guidelines are as follows:

- a) Each child enrolled or admitted to child care 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 30 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.

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 biting issues may result in suspension or termination of care.

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 child care 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

- ✓ 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:

From time to time the child care classrooms may have pets such as guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, small birds and fish. The care and keeping of classroom pets gives children the opportunity to learn how to properly handle and nurture small animals. If classroom pets are present, the teachers will be responsible for the daily care of the animals including proper food and nutrition, exercise and care for the pet's cage or "home."

The classroom teachers may ask for parent volunteers to "foster" a classroom pet during long holidays when the child care is closed. If you are interested in helping in this way, please speak with your child's teacher.

One of the child care licensing standard rules for child care programs states the following: Children at the child care 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.

LITTLE EXPLORE ACADEMY DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

DISCIPLINE MUST BE:

(Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance)

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. A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:
 - ✓ Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
 - ✓ Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
 - ✓ Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
 - ✓ 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 must 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. Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

TUITION GUIDELINES:

Tuition is based on a daily, weekly or monthly schedule unless otherwise discussed. Payment is due on Friday, for the following week and can be paid Weekly or Monthly, etc. Cash or Credit/Debit is only accepted, no checks. *(credit and debit cards shall incur a 3% fee)*

- **PAYMENT of TUITION:**

I understand that Tuition is Due and Payable, Friday for the following 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.

- **LATE or UNPAID TUITION:**

If Payment in Full is Not Received when Due, I agree to Pay a Late Fee of \$25.00 per Day 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. 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 solely responsible for any tuition payment and late fees.

- **CHARGES and PROCEDURES FOR LATE PICK-UP:**

My Full-Time Tuition covers up to 12 Hours of Care per Day, except for Closed Holidays. My Part-Time Tuition covers up to 6 Hours of Care per Day, except for Closed Holidays. I understand that if I fail to Pick my Child Up by the Scheduled 12 or 6 Hours, I will be Charged an Hourly Rate, Per Child, Until the Child(ren) are picked up. No refunds given.

- **ADDITIONAL FEES:**

All students will be charged a Annual Non-Refundable Registration Enrollment Fee, which will secure a classroom spot. All students will also be charged a Non-Refundable Academic Supply Fee twice a year, February 1 and September 1. School Age Explorers Camp will be open during the summer months and scheduled school breaks according to the public school calendar. School Aged Children will be charged an additional Academic Supply Fee during these weeks for Attendance. All other Classes may be subject to an Academic Supply Fee too. No refunds shall be given at any time.

- **DISCOUNTS:**

I understand that if I have more than one(1) child enrolled and attending from my immediate family, a 10% Discount from the usual Tuition Fee is offered to me and is applied to the Oldest Child, with the lowest rate. When three(3) children are enrolled, a 10% Discount from the usual Tuition Fee is offered to me and is applied to the Oldest Children, with the lowest rate. 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 Supply Fees. A 10% Discount will be Offered to Teachers, Military Families and Veterans. Only one discount applies and cannot be combined with any other offer. No refunds shall be given at any time.

- **CHECKS and PAYMENTS:**

No Checks will be Accepted. Cash, 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 2 weeks off, with written notice, without charge each fiscal year. Unpaid Absences are not allowed and will be charged for Full Tuition on these days; no allowances, credits, refunds, or make up days will be given.

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 State Requirement for all Children to be signed in and out each day. Once your child(ren) is signed in on the computer, you must personally walk your child(ren) to their classroom. Once you help your child settle in, by placing belongings into their assigned cubby, and acknowledge the teacher so they know your child is there, you will need to Sign-In and Sign-Out, by hand on the Classroom Form provided by the Cubbies.

Children will only be Released to Designated Persons Written in the Child's File. Those designated must be 18 years old or older. Every person entering the building must Sign In and Out.

LEA Staff will not Release a Child to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If this occurs, we reserve the right to contact local authorities. In the event of any Court Issued Cases, we require a Copy to be on File with the Center in order to enforce the Court. All children can be in care for a maximum of 12 hours a day. Any longer, is considered a Late Pick-Up and will be charged appropriately.

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.

VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers are always welcome in our classrooms; however, volunteers are required to have a Background Check on File at the Center. Each Volunteer is responsible for the cost of their fingerprinting and training. Please communicate with your teacher for classroom visits class participation.

OUTDOOR PLAY:

All children, including infants over 6 months old, will have an opportunity to play outside daily for at least 30 - 45 minutes each time, twice a day in an age-appropriate playground. Strollers and cribs will be used to transport infants and young toddlers.

WATER ACTIVITIES:

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 please). Please provide your child with a Complete Set of Clothes to change into for the remainder of the day and a towel.

FIELD TRIPS:

LEA may schedule Field Trips throughout the year to enhance the educational experience. A written permission slip is required to participate prior to the outing. Depending on the trip, a fee may be charged. All of our staff is trained in Field Trip procedures, i.e.: supervision, transportation safety and State Minimum Standards. Drivers are insured and their Driving Records are verified through the State of Texas. Cell phones are Required in the Vehicle and LEA t-shirts will be Required for the trip and may be purchased at the front desk. Only children over 40 lbs. are allowed to attend the Field Trip per Transportation Requirements.

DATE NIGHT OR MOTHER'S DAY OUT:

On Friday or 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 or Credit/Debit Card will be Paid that night and we will provide Care, Dinner, Movies and Activities. **Please sign up, in advance, if you want to use this service, as it is not part of your regular Tuition.**

LEA will also offer a Drop-Off Service for Mother's Day Out (Except Holidays), during any weekday. A Daily Fee will be charged for this service if not part of your Regular Care.

PARKING LOT:

To ensure the safety of our children, the speed limit in the parking lot is 5 mph. Please do not block the entrance door so all Drop-Off's have equal access.

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.

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.

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. 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. 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.

COMPUTER AND TELEVISION (SCREEN) TIME:

Children are limited to Structured Educational Use, like ABC Mouse and other Educational Programs, only unless otherwise advertised like during Evening or Weekend Care. Television and Games may be used in the evening hours after 4:30 PM and during quiet time for schoolers. No child shall have over 2 hours of screen time per day.

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 accommodations we can to meet the needs.

BABYSITTING POLICY:

LEA Staff are prohibited from providing private child care or babysitting services to customers outside of the school. Breach of this policy shall lead to Termination of Services.

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:

Child Care 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.

CUSTODY AND VISITATION ISSUES:

LEA Staff will 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.

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 by Email, the Information Bulletin Board, and on the Website in the Parent Portal. A Written Acknowledgement of the Changes must be given to the Front desk and placed in the child’s file. 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:

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 I disagree with this, I may submit written refusal in the Enrollment Packet.

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.

ILLNESS:

We do not care for your child if they are sick as we are not a 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 should 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.

ALLERGIES:

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 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

REFUND and SEPERATION POLICY:

Little Explorers Academy is required to incur staff and operating costs even when your child does not attend. Tuition Fees are still required and are not pro-rated for 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 LifeCubby Application, Text or Email with full instructions.

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.

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.

TRANSPORTATION:

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 considered to be 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.

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.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN, INCLEMENT 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 during a Fire or Emergency Drill, we ask that you Follow our Procedures and Evacuate the Building along with the Children. Staff shall communicate updates with parents through the LifeCubby 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 LifeCubby 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
- **Phone:** (281) 720-7207
- **Address:** 15555 Stuebner Airline Rd, Houston, TX 77069

In any and all Emergency Events, Parents will be messaged through the LifeCubby 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. Children under 24 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.

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 Child Care 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 Located in Each Classroom near the Classroom Entrance Door and the Exit Doors.

In any and all Emergency Events, Parents will be messaged through the LifeCubby 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 protentional 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 the class will do the observation and will make notes of anything that is out of the ordinary and make the Center Management Team 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 Child Care in Texas and will be trained on the rationale and procedures for performing the Health Checks. The majority of infectious diseases of concern in child care have incubation periods of less than twenty-one days. Gathering this information may prove useful to Public Health Officials when they investigate Occasional Outbreaks.

Little Explorer Academy and Family Policy Agreement

As a Little Explorer Academy Childcare Center Parent, I have received and reviewed the Little Explorer Academy Family Handbook. 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.

COVID PROTOCOLS or ANY OTHER PANDEMIC

Due to the current Global Pandemic, we have made the following changes in Policies, Procedures and Protocols:

- 1) All Drop Offs of Children will take place Outside the Building. No one is Allowed inside the Building except LEA Staff, Children, Licensing Staff, State Inspectors, Other Persons invited in by the Director on a Needs only Bases. All over the age of 13 years must wear a face mask.
- 2) Anyone Outside of their car at the Center Must wear a Face Mask.
- 3) Face Masks must be worn inside the Building at all times by Adults and Older Children over 2 years who choose to wear one.
- 4) All who enter the building will have a Temperature Check at the Door, before entry and must wash or sanitize hands upon entry.
- 5) No one with a Fever over 100.4 degrees will be admitted in to the building. Should a child develop a fever while in care, they will be isolated until picked up. Those with a fever, may not return to the Center until 72 hours (3 Days) free of Fever without fever reducing medication. Same applies for any listed symptoms of Covid.
- 6) Children will not be served Family Style until further notice. Each child will receive an individual plate of food.
- 7) Social Distancing shall apply Outside the Door and Inside the Building as much as possible. Classroom sizes will be reduced in an effort to adequately social distance.
- 8) Frequent Hand Washing is Required throughout the Building and All must comply.
- 9) We ask Parent to Not Bring Backpacks, Book Bags, or Any non-essential items to help reduce the exposure in the building.
- 10) We shall follow the 13-page Protocol Policies Listed on our Website for this and Any Pandemic.

{We are a State Licensed and Childcare Facility}