



Family Handbook

**Budd Lake:
30 Old Budd Lake Road
Budd Lake, NJ 07828
973.691.9430
Buddlakenj@littlelearnersnj.com**

www.LittleLearnersNJ.com

Important Information

- **Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 7:00am to 5:30pm**
- **Latest drop-off recommended at 9:00am**
- **Children must be signed in & out at the front desk**
- **Download the BP Connect app for important messages, updates, and photos!**
- **CPR + First Aid certified staff always present**
- **Morning snack is 9:30am**
- **Lunches start at 11:30am**
- **Afternoon snack is 3:00pm**
- **Nap time is 12-3:00pm**
- **Infants on individual nap and feeding schedules**
- **Tuition due by 1st of the month**
- **All families must sign up for automatic payments**
- **A \$50 late fee will be charged to tuition unpaid by the 5th**
- **Unpaid tuition may result in suspension and/or termination of care**
- **Return check fee is \$50 per check returned**
- **Late pickups are charged \$40 per child for the first 15 minutes & \$20 per 15 minutes thereafter**
- **30-Day notice of withdrawal required**
- **NJ Manual of Requirements for Childcare Centers:**
<https://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf>
- **Department of Children & Families Website:**
<https://www.nj.gov/dcf/>
- **Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC):**
www.CPSC.GOV/RECALLS

Welcome to Little Learners of Budd Lake

At ***Little Learners***, our philosophy is that every child is a unique individual with their own strengths, interests, and ways of learning. Our program is designed to honor and support each child's development, meeting them where they are and helping them grow at their own pace. Our teachers create a language rich framework to advance communication development within a physical environment that supports their growing motor skills and independence. In addition, our curriculum taps into the natural curiosity of childhood, allowing each preschooler to engage their minds, hands, and hearts by exploring their surroundings.

The primary focus of the Little Learners preschool curriculum is teaching children the necessary skills to participate in a group, be confident and independent, as well as having a knowledge foundation on which to build their education. Our children learn through play in a balance of child-directed and teacher-facilitated activities. Academic skills, such as alphabet, shapes, numbers, colors, & more will be reinforced, and students are encouraged to become problem solvers.

Our approach nurtures the whole child – encouraging creativity, building strong social-emotional skills, and supporting each child's interests and abilities. We create a warm, inclusive environment where children feel safe, confident, and inspired to explore, express, and connect.

Our main objective is to support children and families during their earliest years of learning by helping them develop a strong sense of self, a love of learning, and the confidence to grow, learn, and thrive in every way!

Our Curriculum

At Little Learners, we believe that young children learn best through hands-on experiences, meaningful relationships, and joyful exploration. Our play-based, creative curriculum supports each child's growth in all areas of development – social, emotional, physical, and cognitive – while nurturing creativity, curiosity, and a love of learning.

We thoughtfully balance structured and unstructured activities, offering daily opportunities for children to engage in open-ended play, build relationships, and participate in teacher-guided experiences and “invitations to play.” Our classrooms are rich in language, movement, music, art, and sensory play, creating a dynamic learning environment tailored to each age and stage.

From infants to pre-k, our curriculum includes:

- **Language & Communication:** We promote early literacy and communication skills through books, storytelling, conversations, songs, and sign language.
- **Social & Emotional Development:** We help children build empathy, resilience, and self-awareness through cooperative play, guided interactions, and daily routines that support emotional intelligence.

- **Creative Expression:** Children explore process-based art, music, dramatic play, movement, and activities that encourage self-expression and imagination.
- **Cognitive Development:** Early math and science concepts are woven into everyday play- like sorting, counting, measuring, observing, and experimenting – with plenty of sensory and hands-on materials.
- **Motor Skills:** Both fine & gross motor development are supported through active play, art, building, and outdoor time.
- **Community & Connection:** We emphasize kindness, inclusion, and collaboration. Children learn what it means to be part of a classroom community and build strong relationships with peers and teachers.

Supplies

Please refer to your child's classroom supply list for specific details, but in general, all children should come to school prepared for a full day of learning and play. Each child needs at least two snacks and a well-balanced lunch, packed without any glass containers/bottles. All children must bring a labeled water bottle, along with extra water if needed- we do have tap water available for refills if needed. If your child wears diapers, please provide an ongoing supply of diapers and wipes. Every child also needs naptime supplies, including a crib sheet and blanket (infants are not allowed to have a blanket or swaddle, but may use a sleep sack). Children should also have at least 2 changes of seasonally appropriate clothing.

All items must be clearly labeled with your child's name. This includes clothing, jackets, containers, bottles, and bedding.

Toys from home are strongly discouraged, and we are not responsible for lost or damaged personal items from home.

A Typical Day:

Each day is filled with joy, wonder, and purpose – laying the foundation for lifelong learning and whole-child development. Please see your child's specific classroom schedule for more details.

CIRCLE TIME – This is where the teacher and children discuss topics such as weather, seasons, calendar, etc.

ARTS & CRAFTS – Children working with play-doh, finger painting, feet painting, watercolors, coloring, making holiday-oriented projects, etc. Activities are geared to developing fine motor skills.

SNACK & LUNCH – Sent from home (nut-free). We support gentle nutrition and encourage healthy choices while respecting each child's needs and fostering a positive relationship with food. We will not label foods as “good” or “bad.” If it is in the lunchbox, it's allowed – we do not withhold food.

READING READINESS – Daily activities build early literacy through stories, songs, rhymes, vocabulary, letters, writing, and a love of books!

OUTDOOR PLAY – The playground features a series of interconnected learning and fun components on a multi-level continuous structure.

MATH READINESS – Children explore numbers, patterns, shapes, and problem solving through hands-on play, games, and routines.

FREE PLAY TIME – A time during which children may play with puzzles, blocks, trucks and planes, housekeeping (kitchen set), dolls, etc.

GROUP TIME – Consists of activities planned by the teacher which may include science experiments, nature study walks, puppetry, movies, etc.

ART & SENSORY – Open ended art and sensory play that encourages self-expression, creativity, and exploration.

PHYS. ED & MUSIC – Children participate in exercises, music, and games to help with muscle development and coordination.

Attendance & Absences

Attendance:

Consistent attendance and arrival by 9:00am help children settle in, build routines, and fully participate in the day's activities.

Absence Policy:

It is the parent(s) responsibility to notify the school before 9:00am that their child will be absent for the day. Any absence longer than three (3) consecutive days will require a doctor's note upon return to school.

No credit is given for absences. You are required to pay for your child's monthly tuition as long as your child is enrolled in this school.

Vacation & Holiday Schedule:

Tuition remains the same each month regardless of absences or vacations; we do not offer vacation credits. We are closed for major holidays and one annual in-service day. Tuition is not adjusted for these closures. Please refer to the school calendar for more information.

Snow Days:

We DO NOT follow the same schedule as the township schools; please do not assume that we are open or closed. We will send out an email and notification on the BP Connect App if we are closing or have a delayed opening, or early dismissal.

Dropping Off Your Child:

All children need to be brought into the building and walked to their classroom or left in the care of the appropriate staff members. At no time should a child be left in the lobby, parking lot, playground, or outside the building. Parents may not allow children to walk upstairs while they drop off a younger sibling, or vice versa.

3A:52-6.5 POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached. If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order. If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child is supervised at all times;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual;

2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child. For school-age child care programs, no child shall be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instruction from the child's parent(s)

3A:52-7.1 Illnesses and communicable diseases

(a) A center that seeks to serve any children who have any of the illnesses, symptoms of illness, or diseases specified in (c) and (d) below shall meet all applicable provisions of this subchapter and all provisions of N.J.A.C. 3A:52-8.

(b) Under no circumstances shall any center serve or admit any child who has any illness, symptom of illness or disease that a health care provider has determined requires the child to be: 1. Confined to home under a health care provider's immediate care; or 2. Admitted to a hospital for medical care and treatment.

(c) The following provisions relate to illness or symptoms of illness:

1. A center serving well children shall not permit a child who has any of the illnesses or symptoms of illness specified in (c)1i through xiii below to be admitted to the center on a given day unless medical diagnosis from a health care provider, which has been communicated to the center in writing, or verbally with a written follow-up, indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or herself or to other children. Such illnesses or symptoms of illness shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following:

- i. Severe pain or discomfort;
- ii. Acute diarrhea, characterized as twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a change to a looser consistency within a period of 24 hours, or bloody diarrhea;
- iii. Two or more episodes of acute vomiting within a period of 24 hours;
- iv. Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over or axillary temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over in conjunction with behavior changes;
- v. Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness;
- vi. Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin;
- vii. Red eyes with discharge;
- viii. Infected, untreated skin patches;
- ix. Difficult rapid breathing or severe coughing;
- x. Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes;
- xi. Weeping or bleeding skin lesions that have not been treated by a health care provider;
- xii. Mouth sores with drooling; or xiii. Stiff neck.

2. Once the child is symptom-free, or a health care provider indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or herself or to other children, the child may return to the center.

3. If a child who has already been admitted to the center manifests any of the illnesses or symptoms of illness specified in (c)1 above, the center shall remove the child from the group of well children to a separate room or area, as specified in N.J.A.C. 3A:52-5.3(q)4, until:

- i. He or she can be taken from the center; or 68
 - ii. The director or his or her designee has communicated verbally with a health care provider, who indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or herself or to other children, at which time the child may return to the group.
4. The center may exclude a child whose illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children at the center. (d) The following provisions relate to excludable communicable diseases:
1. The center shall not permit a child or staff member with an excludable communicable disease, as set forth in the Department of Health's Reporting Requirements for Communicable Diseases and Work-Related Conditions Quick Reference Guide, revised July 2011, and available at http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf, incorporated herein by reference, as amended and supplemented, to be admitted to or remain at the center, until:
- i. A note from the child's or staff member's health care provider states that the child or staff member, respectively, has been diagnosed and presents no risk to himself, herself, or to others;
 - ii. The center has contacted the Communicable Disease Program in the State Department of Health, or the local health department pediatric health consultant, and is told the child or staff member poses no health risk to others; or
 - iii. If the child or staff member has chicken pox, the center obtains a note from the parent or staff member stating that all sores have dried and crusted.
- 3A:52-7.2 Attendance by children or staff members known to be infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) (a) The center should admit a child known to be infected with HIV, the virus that causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), to the center. (b) The center should not exclude a child known to be infected with HIV in order to protect him or her from possible exposure to the infectious diseases of other persons at the center. (c) The center should not exclude a child solely for the reason that such individual lives with or is related to a person known to be infected with HIV. (d) The director shall maintain the confidentiality of any child or staff member known to be infected with HIV. (e) The center shall not require the routine medical screening of children or staff members in a center to detect the presence of HIV.

Excludable Communicable Diseases

A child who contracts any of the following diseases may not return to the center without a physician's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others:

Chicken Pox**	Giardia Lambli* ^a	Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
German Measels	Hepatitis A*	Mouth sores with drooling
Hemophilus Influenzae*	Salmonella	Skin rashes with fevers
Measels*	Shigella*	Infected, untreated skin patches
Meningococcus*	Acute diarrhea	Red eyes with discharge
Mumps*	Impetigo	Elevated temperate of 101.5 degrees (f)
Strep Throat	Lice	
Tuberculosis*	Scabies	
Whooping Cough*	Acute vomiting	

Please remember to report any contagious illness to the school. Notices will be sent to parents advising you of any outbreaks of illness.

If a child is absent for three (3) or more days or has a contagious illness; a doctor's note is required to return to school!

*Reportable diseases that will be reported to the health department by the center.

**If you child has chicken pox, a doctor's note is required for readmitting the child to the center. A note from the parent is required, stating either that at least six days has elapsed since the onset of the rash, or that all sores have dried and crusted.

We do everything in our power to reduce the risks of infections and illnesses. Our staff is required to wipe down all tables and benches with a solution of soapy water and bleach after each use. In addition, our building (classrooms, bathrooms, and kitchen) is professionally cleaned and sanitized on a daily basis.

CENETER POLICY IS THAT ANY CHILD WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS MUST BE SYMPTOM & FEVER FREE FOR 24 HOURS AND/OR A DOCTORS NOTE CLEARING YOUR CHILD TO RETURN TO SCHOOL! NO EXCEPTIONS!

Communicable Disease Reporting Guidelines

Some excludable communicable diseases must be reported to the health department by the center. The Department of Health's Reporting Requirements for Communicable Diseases and Work Related Conditions Quick Reference Guide, a complete list of reportable excludable communicable diseases can be found at: http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf

Medication:

Our directors & designee may administer prescription medication during school hours with a signed medication form from parents. Medication must be in its original container, which is clearly marked with the child's name, name of the medicine, and dosages (amounts/times) to be followed. It must be handed to the Director/Designee, along with the permission form stating when the last dosage was given (time), and how long it is to continue. Medication forms are valid for one week. The first dose may never be administered at our center.

Over the counter medication may not be administered without a note from the child's pediatrician. Children may not attend school. Children may not attend school while on fever-reducing medication as it can mask symptoms of illness.

Allergies: We are a nut free school. Staff must be informed of all diagnosed allergies. If your child requires an epi-pen, the state REQUIRES two clearly labeled EpiPens be kept at the school, along with a current Action Plan from the pediatrician.

Rescue Medications: Any rescue medications (such as inhalers) must be provided by the parent, clearly labeled, and accompanied by a current doctor's action plan.

NOTE:

New Jersey State Law now requires:

That any child attending pre-school and is under the age of 5 must have an updated yearly Influenza Vaccine and bring in proper documentation to the school for record keeping stating the shot was administered by a physician or clinic.

Parents must also have a new Universal Child Health Record Form completed by their doctor every year that your child is enrolled at our school.

Tuition

1. All families must sign-up for autopay.
2. Tuition is due on the 1st of the month. A \$50 late fee will be charged to all unpaid tuition by the 5th.
3. Unpaid tuition will result in suspension of care on the 6th.
4. If your check is returned to us with insufficient funds then you will be charged a \$50 returned check fee charge and any applicable late fees.
5. Our center closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Children need to be picked up and off the premises at 6:00 p.m. A late charge of \$40.00 (per child) for the first fifteen minutes or fraction thereof that a child remains in the building after 6:00, and a \$20.00 charge per 15 minutes thereafter, will be charged.
6. An annual registration fee of \$150 per child is applied with each September's tuition. The registration fee is non-refundable.
7. Parents must provide the center with a 30-Day written notice of withdrawal. Parents are responsible for tuition for these final weeks whether their children attend during the period or not. If 30-day notice is provided, the initial deposit will go towards the last month's tuition. If advance notice of 30 days is not provided, the deposit is forfeited.
8. A finder's fee of \$2,500 will be paid to Firm Foundations/ Little Learners by BrightPath in the event you hire or employ a Firm Foundations/ Little Learners by BrightPath employee while they are employed at Firm Foundations/ Little Learners by BrightPath, or within 60 days of their last day of employment at Firm Foundations/ Little Learners by BrightPath, for other than incidental babysitting.

Dress Code & Weather

Preschool is messy—and that's a good thing! Children should come to school dressed for play, exploration, and a little dirt. Our days are filled with hands-on activities like paint, playdough, sensory bins, and outdoor adventures. We play outside daily, and our playground is covered in mulch, where children love to dig, climb, and search for bugs.

Please send your child in comfortable play clothes that can get dirty. We highly recommend closed-toed sneakers for safety and comfort. While Crocs are allowed, sneakers help keep toes cleaner and are less likely to collect mulch (which can sometimes cause splinters). We want your child to feel free to explore without worry—so dress for the mess!

Don't forget to always keep spare clothes at the school for your little learner and make sure to switch them out seasonally and as your child grows.

Outdoor Play & Weather

We go outside every day in all safe weather, including heat, cold, rain, and even snow! Outdoor play is essential for healthy development, fresh air, and learning through movement and nature. Please be sure your child arrives with weather-appropriate clothing—such as jackets, hats, gloves, rain boots, or sun hats, etc.—so they can fully enjoy their time outdoors. We will adjust outdoor time based on safety and weather conditions, but fresh air is a daily part of our routine.

Birthdays, Holidays, & Special Events

We celebrate birthdays during snack times. Parents may send tablecloths, plates, napkins, cupcakes, cake, etc. and the teacher will try to make this a special time for your child. Please note, all treats must be nut-free. Balloons are not allowed in the center.

We celebrate many major holidays and seasonal events with fun in-class activities and parties. Families may be invited to contribute snacks, supplies, or other items if they are able – participation is always optional and appreciated. Please refer to the school calendar for upcoming holidays, celebrations, and special events throughout the year. If there are any cultural or family holidays that are meaningful to you, please let us know – we'd love to include them in our celebrations when possible!

Home School Connection

What Children Learn at Home:

Our curriculum works best when teachers and parents work together because each of us has something valuable to contribute.

We are trained in child development and early childhood education. We see how your child acts with other children and adults. We can assess what your child is learning and how he or she compares to other children. But only you have in-depth knowledge of your child. You know your child's interests, fears, joys, patterns, and past. You are most familiar with the world your child is trying to understand. You know about the relationships between members of your family, and you have shared many of your child's experiences, from family events to trips to the doctor's office or the zoo.

This in-depth knowledge makes you central to your child's learning process and a very valuable resource for us as teachers. If you share with us what is happening at home; arrival of a new baby, the death of a pet, nightmares, temper tantrums, trips, separation or divorce-we can understand your child better. We can deal with both positive and difficult events through reassuring stories, soothing art activities, imaginative dramatic play, and extra love and attention.

We also see you as your child's first and most important teacher. Your home is your child's first and continual learning environment. You decide your family's daily routines-when you get up, eat, play, do chores, visit friends, and go to bed. The way you talk with your children makes a tremendous difference in how they think, how they feel about themselves, and the kind of people they will become.

If we can work together, we can do some of the same things at school and at home-your child will be much better off. The more consistent we adults are, the more secure your child is likely to feel. And when children feel secure, they are more likely to explore, experiment, and most importantly to learn.

A lot of parents have asked us what they can do to help their children succeed in school. Our reply is that you don't need to buy a lot of special toys or equipment to turn your child into a creative thinker. The best thing you can do is to be a good listener and to talk with your child as you go about your normal, everyday household chores. Sometimes, after a long day at work, this may seem difficult, but you'll find that this kind of attention has a wonderful effect on children.

Parents as Partners*

Parents and teachers may look at young children's learning from different perspectives, but they share a common goal: making sure children receive the best possible education. Mutual respect and communication between programs and families takes advantage of both perspectives to provide children with the kind of care and education that will help them thrive.

Today's family members and caregivers have many responsibilities and time constraints. It takes extra effort on both sides to build strong partnerships.

Tips for Parents –

- Listen carefully to what your child's teacher / caregiver has to say. Remember that they spend a significant amount of time with children and can share expertise about their development.
- Don't jump to conclusions. If you have questions or concerns about your child or the early childhood program, speak directly to your child's teacher / caregiver, don't panic or merely commiserate with other parents when questions arise.
- Remember that many teachers or caregivers have families of their own, and may share similar responsibilities and time constraints. Be as respectful of their time as you wish them to be of yours.

Parent Concerns:

If a problem exists, the Center wants it corrected as quickly as possible. This can only be achieved if it is identified immediately. Parents are asked to refrain from discussing their concerns with other parents, instead following the procedures listed below-

- Parents with concerns should first discuss them with the classroom teacher. Other staff members are instructed to avoid discussing any concern with a parent that has not been addressed by the classroom teacher or directed to the office.
- If the classroom teacher cannot resolve the concern independently and to the satisfaction of the parent, within 24 hours the teacher should bring the matter to the Director.
- If a parent brings the concern to the Director without first consulting the classroom teacher, the Director will ask the parent to confer first with the teacher.
- If the classroom teacher and the Director are unable to arrive at a solution, the teacher should ask the parent to schedule a conference with the Director.
- If the Director is unable to arrive at a solution satisfactory to the parent, within 24 hours the Director should bring the matter to the attention of the owners.

Information to Parents

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52), every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents and staff this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent and staff member's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the “Treasurer, State of New Jersey”, and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child’s departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center. Parents are entitled to review the center’s copy of the OOL’s Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint OOL/Information to Parents/May 2019 Page 2 of 2 investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL’s Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at <https://childcareexplorer.njccis.com/portal/>.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children. Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children’s use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center’s space. Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available. Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292- 0422 or go to www.state.nj.us/def/

GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult. Methods of positive discipline shall be consistent with the age and developmental needs of the children, and lead to the ability to develop and maintain self-control. Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem. You can use positive discipline by planning ahead:

- Anticipate and eliminate potential problems.
- Have a few consistent, clear rules that are explained to children and understood by adults.
- Have a well-planned daily schedule.
- Plan for ample elements of fun and humor.
- Include some group decision-making.
- Provide time and space for each child to be alone.
- Make it possible for each child to feel he/she has had some positive impact on the group.
- Provide the structure and support children need to resolve their differences.
- Share ownership and responsibility with the children. Talk about our room, our toys. You can use positive discipline by intervening when necessary:
- Re-direct to a new activity to change the focus of a child's behavior.
- Provide individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation.
- Use time-out -- by removing a child for a few minutes from the area or activity so that he/she may gain self-control. (One minute for each year of the child's age is a good rule of thumb).
- Divert the child and remove from the area of conflict.
- Provide alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings.
- Point out natural or logical consequences of children's behavior.
- Offer a choice only if there are two acceptable options.

- Criticize the behavior, not the child. Don't say "bad boy" or "bad girl." Instead you might say "That is not allowed here." You can use positive discipline by showing love and encouragement:
 - Catch the child being good. Respond to and reinforce positive behavior; acknowledge or praise to let the child know you approve of what he/she is doing.
 - Provide positive reinforcement through rewards for good behavior.
 - Use encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism.
 - Overlook small annoyances, and deliberately ignore provocations.
 - Give hugs and caring to every child every day.
 - Appreciate the child's point of view.
 - Be loving, but don't confuse loving with license. Positive discipline is NOT:
 - Disciplining a child for failing to eat or sleep or for soiling themselves
 - Hitting, shaking, or any other form of corporal punishment
 - Using abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment of children
 - Engaging in or inflicting any form of child abuse and/or neglect
 - Withholding food, emotional responses, stimulation, or opportunities for rest or sleep
 - Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for an inappropriately long period of time
- Positive discipline takes time, patience, repetition and the willingness to change the way you deal with children. But it's worth it, because positive discipline works

Child Abuse and Neglect

Children who attend our program are cared for, nurtured, and kept safe at all times. Because child abuse is a very serious allegation, policies are intended to protect both the children in our care as well as colleagues at the Center. At no point should a child be left alone or without supervision.

It is the Center's goal to employ childcare professionals who are committed to the highest standard of ethical behavior. To ensure the health and safety of young children in a care, a policy of "Zero Tolerance for Child Abuse" is strictly enforced.

Children at the Center should expect to be treated with kindness, concern, and respect at all times. Any employee who exhibits unprofessional behavior that could be construed as abusive may be dismissed from work without any accrued benefits or assistance in legal representation. Any evidence of physical or sexual abuse or misconduct will be grounds for immediate dismissal. Staff is advised that corporal punishment or physical or verbal discipline is considered abuse.

Any person who has information about behavior that may reasonably be characterized as known or suspected child abuse or neglect shall make a report to the Director and to appropriate authorities, as required by law. Allegations of abuse shall be reported to caregivers and investigated.

Any employee accused of abuse or neglect shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Until the issue is resolved, an employee suspected of abuse or neglect may be reassigned, suspended or placed on administrative leave, either with or without pay, at the discretion of the Director

Expulsion Policy:

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION:

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION:

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse to staff.

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION:

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION: If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/ guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period and the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED IF A PARENT/GUARDIAN:

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
- Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other child care arrangements.

PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT EXPULSION:

- Try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Reassess classroom environment, appropriateness of activities, supervision.
- Always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Praise appropriate behaviors.
- Consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Give the child verbal warnings.
- Give the child time to regain control.
- Document the child's disruptive behavior and maintain confidentiality.
- Give the parent/guardian written copies of the disruptive behavior that might lead to expulsion.
- Schedule a conference including the director, classroom staff, and parent/guardian to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.

- Give the parent literature of other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommend an evaluation by professional consultation on premises.
- Recommend an evaluation by local school district study team

Policy on the Use of Technology and Social Media

Parents are recommended not to send in any sort of electronic device that would cause a distraction to their child. If you must send something, it must be kept within their belongings.

We use technology in a limited, intentional, and developmentally appropriate way in accordance with guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and NJ DCF. Children under age 2 do not use screen-based technology, and no screen time is used for children in care less than four hours. For children age 2 and older, screen time is limited to a maximum of 30 minutes per week and only used as part of teacher-guided educational activities—not for entertainment or passive viewing. Exceptions may apply for children with an IEP or IFSP.

Technology is used only as a learning tool, supporting areas such as early literacy, math, music and movement, and cultural exploration. All use is actively supervised by teachers, who engage with children during screen time. Children are never left alone with access to technology.

Staff may use devices for classroom documentation and family communication, but personal phone use during instructional time is prohibited unless approved in emergencies. We are committed to protecting children's privacy, and no photos, videos, or recordings are shared without parent permission. Parents may not download and share photos of other children from the app, or take photos of other children in the classroom, on field trips, etc. Families are always informed about how technology is used in the classroom.

Policy Updates & Rebranding Notice

All policies, procedures, tuition rates, fees, and agreements outlined in this handbook are subject to change. As we transition through our rebranding process to BrightPath, there may be updates that reflect new standards, systems, or offerings. Families will be notified of any changes as early as possible, and we are committed to providing clear communication and ample notice whenever adjustments are made. Thank you for your partnership and flexibility during this exciting time of growth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RULES, REGULATIONS, AND TUITION AGREEMENT

By my signature, I/we acknowledge that I/we have read this handbook and am willing to comply with the rules, regulations, and policies of the school. I also acknowledge that I/we have been informed with regard to specific policies on:

1. Information to Parents
2. Policy on the Release of Children
3. Policy on Management of Communicable Diseases
4. Expulsion policy and Discipline policy
5. Policy on the Use of Technology & Social Media

Parent 1-Print Name

Parent 1-Signature

Date

Parent 2-Print Name

Parent 2-Signature

Date

Child 1 Name

Child 2 Name (if applicable)

Child 3 Name (if applicable)