

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing Little Explorers Child Development Center to care for your child. We look forward to working with you so that we can insure that both you and your child have a healthy and successful experience at school.

### Mission Statement

**We believe that all children are special. Our mission is to provide a warm, safe, nurturing environment so that all children can succeed. We strive to know each child on an individual basis and develop a relationship with the children and parents to provide a loving yet motivated and developmentally appropriate learning environment.**

### History, Purpose and Program

The Little Explorers Child Development Center is an independently owned and operated business. It was founded in February 2005 to provide high quality care for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old. We hope to create a framework of love and acceptance that will set the stage for discovery and growth. We believe that when we allow a child to make appropriate choices, we are building a firm foundation for later learning and preparing the child for the ever-changing world.

**By looking at the children individually, we hope to encourage autonomy and support them in all their areas of development; social, emotional, mental, and physical; thereby achieving a positive self -image for each child. The classroom will be arranged to meet all those areas of development in a clean and safe place for the child to grow. The day plan will be flexible, however, to meet the interests of the children. We will structure the environment, but not the processes of play itself.**

### Hours of Operation

Little Explorer Child Development Center is open each day from **6:30 am to 6:15 pm**. Monday through Friday. Children can be enrolled full or part time. All children should arrive and depart as close to their contracted time as possible. All children must be picked up by 6:15 pm. If for some reason you are unable to pick up your child on time, you are responsible to arrange for a back up person to do so. If you are unable to make those arrangements, please call the center as soon as possible to notify us that you will be late.

### Holidays and Early Dismissals

The center is open year round.

We will be closed the following days:

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

3 Days Between Christmas and New Years

New Years Day

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

The Center will close at 12 p.m. on Good Friday.  
The Center will close at 12 p.m. on New Years Eve.

### **Weather Closings**

In the event of inclement weather, closings and delayed openings will be announced on the local T.V. stations, Channel 3,WSFB and Channel 8, WTNH. And through a text blast system. You may also choose to call the center 270-3490. A message will be left after 6:00 a.m. as to a delayed opening or closing. Payment for care is still required under these circumstances. Emergency medical, fire, weather and evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

### **Late Pick-Up Policy**

The state mandates that a minimum of two staff members be on the premises for the entire time that the day care is open. We ask that you notify the day care immediately if you know you will be late. It is your responsibility to contact one of the names you have set up as a back up pick up to take your child home. If you are unable to contact any of these people please let your child's teacher know this as soon as possible. You will be responsible to pay each caregiver forced to remain over for their time. The fee for late care is \$15. for the first 15 minutes late then \$10 for every 5 minutes late after 6:30 p.m.

If we have not been notified by a parent or guardian that the child cannot be picked up, and we are unable to contact a parent or back up person by 7:00 pm. we are required to notify the Newtown Police Department of the situation. Please show our staff and their families the respect they deserve by arriving on time to pick up your child. Your cooperation in this area is essential in maintaining a positive teacher/ parent relationship.

### **The First Few Days**

The first few days in a new classroom can be both exciting and tiring for the child. No matter how well the parent has prepared the child, perceptions and expectations vary. There will be many new experiences during the first few days; new

Our staff is trained to help make the transition as smooth as possible. Each child responds differently. Some children don't want the parent to leave the classroom, while others wave cheerfully good-bye on the first day only to show signs of anxiety days or weeks later. Still others make the transition with no apparent difficulty. Parents should understand that separation process is an important issue for their child. Parents can help by being patient through this process and by maintaining a positive attitude.

Occasionally a stressful experience such as extended illness, a vacation, or a traumatic family event may cause a child to regress to the behaviors of the first days. Please understand that this is a normal reaction. Communication between family and our staff will be invaluable in helping the child deal with any potential difficult situation

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Enrollment Requirements**

For a child to be accepted in our Center, we first must have received all of the following:

1. Registration Form
2. Registration Fee
3. Tuition Deposit
4. Parent Alternate Release
5. Childcare Health Record: to be completed by your child's physician
6. Several Days visiting your child's classroom - you and your child together.

### **Payments: Registration Fee and Deposit**

To register, there is a nonrefundable registration fee. Refer to Rates and Fee Sheet.

A deposit equaling two weeks tuition is due at the time of registration. The deposit will be applied toward your last weeks tuition payment upon withdrawal if, and only if, the office has received the requisite notification.

**If after registering, a family chooses alternate care, any fees paid are non-refundable.**

### **Tuition**

All parents are liable for the contracted fee for care unless special arrangements have been made. Payment is due in advance for the following week and must be made for the next week by the last day of the week that your child is in our care. For instance, if your child is enrolled Monday – Friday, you would pay by Friday for the next weeks care. If special arrangements have been made for tuition payments to be paid on Monday, please be sure to have it in no later than Monday morning. All checks received after Monday morning must include a \$10.00 per day late fee. If you know you will not be able to make payment on the due date, please notify the office in advance so they can try to make alternate arrangements. Full payment is due even though your child may be absent due to illness, vacation, or extended leave. Tuition will not be refunded for missed days due to severe weather. Missed days cannot be made up. There will be no tuition due for the 5 days the center closes in December.

### **Drop off and Pick –up of Children**

An adult, either a parent or guardian must escort children to and from school. Please be sure that you remember to close all doors or gates behind you! Please be sure to sign your child in and out and record the time. Under no circumstances will we allow an employee to transfer your child to or from the school.

**PLEASE BE AWARE OF PUBLIC ACT NO. 97-298: IT IS A  
CLASS A MISDEMEANOR TO KNOWINGLY LEAVE  
CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF TWELVE  
UNSUPERVISED IN A PUBLIC  
ACCOMODATION OR IN A MOTOR VEHICLE.**

### **Signing In and Out**

A child needs to be personally signed in and signed out by a parent or designated alternate. The time of day must be included and initialed. Only a parent or parent alternate may pick up a child. The parent alternate is a responsible adult family member or friend who has been authorized by the parent to pick up or drop off their child. Parent Alternate Release Forms with assigned individuals are always kept on file in the office. If we are unfamiliar with a parent alternate who arrives to pick up a child we will request identification before the child is released into that person's custody.

### **Notification of Changes**

Please be sure to immediately notify our office of any relevant changes such as an address change, a change of phone number, a change of work or work phone number, or a different parent alternate.

### **Appropriate Dress for School**

Our program keeps children active and involved, and they should be dressed accordingly. Children should wear play clothes that are comfortable, washable, and easy for them to manage by themselves. We will be playing hard and children should be dressed for close encounters with paint, paste, sand, dirt, flour, water and clay. **Please do not wear your best clothes because we cannot guarantee their unstained return.** Sneakers or other non-skid shoes are essential! **Little Explorers is not responsible for any damage to your child's clothing that may happen during the day.**

Dressing is part of our curriculum – we encourage the children to learn how to dress themselves. Clothing with easy snaps, buttons, and zippers will make it easier for them to do so.

We provide smocks for the children to wear when they are involved in messy activities but there will be times when sand, paint or juice may soil clothing. We would rather not inhibit their enjoyment by being concerned about their clothing.

**Parents should label all clothes and other personal items with the child's name so they will not be misplaced.** Also, parents should keep two sets of clothing (except shoes) at the center. They should be brought in a small backpack that is clearly marked on the outside with the child's name.

There is an outdoor play period everyday if the weather permits, even during the winter months. As long as the temperature is above 20 degrees children do go outside. Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather. In cold weather, children should come dressed with a warm coat, hat, scarf, gloves or mittens, boots, and their legs should be covered. If we feel that a child is not dressed appropriately for the weather, we will not allow the parent to sign in the child until the situation is rectified.

A rest time is required for all children. Pre-schoolers and toddlers sleep on cots that we provide. Parents must supply each child with a sheet and a comfortable blanket that can fold and fit into their cubbies. Toddlers and pre-schoolers can also have a travel size pillow. Parents are responsible to launder these items weekly.

Infants sleep in cribs provided by the center. Sheets and blankets should be laundered as needed, at least washed weekly. **Again, please remember to label all items such as blankets, indoor and outdoor clothing, pacifiers and utensils.** We are not responsible for any items that are not clearly marked.

### **Administration of Medication**

Prescription and non prescription medications and topical ointments will be administered to children by an authorized provider who has completed a course given by a physician, physician assistant, advanced practice nurse or registered nurse who has successfully completed a training program which meets the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health regulations.

Medications will only be administered by such a person when they are accompanied by the proper authorization forms.

We use two forms for this purpose.

The first form “**AUTHORIZATION FOR PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS**” is to be completed if your child needs to take any kind of prescription or non prescription medication while at our learning center. This form must be completed by a parent and a physician and must include ALL of the information requested. The authorized provider is responsible to update and complete this record each time a medication is given. Below is a list of prescription and non-prescription medications that we will administer to your child.

- Antibiotics
- Prescription eye drops or ointments
- Prescription cough medicines
- Metered dose inhalers
- Tylenol
- Non-prescription cough syrups

Medications must be brought to school in its original container and must have the following information clearly labeled on container or packaging:

- Child’s name
- Name of medication
- Directions for administering
- Date of prescription or purchase
- Prescription number and pharmacy when applicable
- Name of physician

Parents are responsible to supply a pre measured spoon for liquid oral medications.

**Little Explorers Child Development Center will not administer either the first or second dose of any medication.**

### ***NO INVESTIGATIONAL DRUGS WILL BE ADMINISTERED IN THIS CENTER***

The second form that we use for this purpose is our “**PARENT/GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF NON-PRESCRIPTION TOPICAL MEDICATIONS BY DAY CARE PERSONNEL.**”

This form must be completed by a parent and records of applications must be completed by an authorized provider after each use. Ointments that we will administer to your child include:

- Non prescription diaper changing ointments that are free of antibiotic or anti fungal or steroidal components

Non prescription teething medications

Non prescription sunscreen protectants that are free of amino benzoic acid (PABA) or its derivatives.

Non prescription insect repellents.

All prescription and non prescription medications must be stored in a locked area or container in a refrigerator away from foods and inaccessible to children. Keys to locked container are only accessible to authorized staff.

All non prescription topical ointments must be stored away from food and inaccessible to children.

All administration of medication records which have been completed will be kept on file at our facility and shall become part of that child's health record.

Any error in administering medications must be documented on forms and reported to parent immediately.

All unused medications shall be returned to the parent.

Each prescription, non prescription or topical ointment must have its own individual form completed.

Each child in a family must have their own individual forms completed.

It is our policy to decline administering prescription, non prescription or topical ointments if they are not labeled correctly and accompanied by the proper completed forms.

### **Birthdays**

Each classroom recognizes birthdays in a special way. If parents would like to help make the occasion more festive, we welcome you to share a special **healthy** snack with the classroom. We do not allow cake, ice cream, or other sugary snacks. We will also not allow balloons, party favors or other birthday accessories as they create expectations and competition for bigger and better.

Parents should make arrangements to share the celebration with the classroom teachers at least one week in advance.

Celebrations scheduled outside of school hours should not be part of school life. For example, parents should not ask the classroom teacher to distribute party invitations or to deliver gifts for children not attending such festivities.

### **Procedure for Filing Complaints**

This procedure is for child day care programs, which are licensed under the authority of Connecticut General Statutes 19a-79a-8, inclusive.

Most problems within a day care center are non-life threatening and can be resolved by:

1. Discussing the problem with the classroom teacher.
2. Discussing the problem with the Director or the Assistant Director.
3. Discussing the problem with the owners.
4. If the problem is not resolved, you may contact the Department of Health Services – Day Care Licensing Unit.

In cases of emergency, notify the Department of Health Services as soon as the emergency is under control.

In cases of abuse/neglect or life-threatening situation, contact the Department of Children and Families at 1-800-842-2288 and the Department of Health Services - Day Care Licensing Unit.

ALL INSPECTION REPORTS AND COMPLIANCE LETTERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUR INSPECTION AT THIS DAY CARE PROGRAM OR BY CONTACTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES - DAY CARE LICENSING UNIT.

***Mailing Address:***

State of Connecticut  
Department of Public Health  
410 Capitol Avenue MS#DAC  
P.O. Box 340308  
Hartford, CT 06134-0308

***Telephone Numbers:***

1-800-282-6063  
1-800-439-0437

**Withdrawal**

When withdrawing your child from Little Explorers, written notification is required at least 30 days prior to withdrawal date. Failure to do so will make you ineligible for a refund of your tuition deposit.

It is our policy to prohibit harassment of our employees. We firmly believe that by our communicating with each other directly we can resolve any difficulties that may arise and develop a mutually beneficial relationship. We are committed to provide the best possible care for your children. If you feel that after talking with your child's teachers that the problem is not being addressed properly please talk with Elaine or the assistant director Greg. Continual harassment of a teacher could be grounds for expulsion from the program.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Plan For Supervision**

We make it a practice to use language that promotes self-esteem in both praise and discipline. When we observe and encourage your child at work, we take care to notice in detail what they have achieved. (“You worked a long time on that painting. You covered the paper with lots of blue lines.”) The child is then given the opportunity to identify what he has achieved and come to the conclusion that his work is beautiful or good on his own, and will be able to open up in his expression with a new self-confidence.

There are at least two staff present at all times when children are in the building. Group size is no larger than 20 children with a ratio of one teacher for 10 children ages 3 to 6; and one teacher for 4 infants/ toddlers, with the group size not exceeding 8 infants and toddlers. The director will be available to help maintain ratios during any emergency as well as help to cover teacher breaks, naptime help. Bathrooms are located in the classrooms where the teachers can view the bathroom as well as the classroom. There is a bathroom with an outside door located by the playground so if a child needs to use a bathroom while playing outside the teacher can still observe the playground and the child in the bathroom. The doors of the bathroom will be left open so observation is possible. Also there will be a staff person who will be considered a floater. This person will help to maintain proper ratios in the classrooms. **Staff supervises children by sight and sound at all times.**

Children will be noted as to time of arrival and time of pickup daily, and kept as a daily record. Parents must always sign in and out, noting the time of arrival and pickup on the form posted in the classrooms when you bring or pick up your child. Parents are asked to call the school by 10 am each day if the child is absent.

### **Discipline Policy**

One of the goals of Little Explorers Child Development Center is to create a comfortable environment that allows each child to develop self-confidence, self discipline and a good self image through the effective use of a caring, trained staff. Since sharing, caring, and helping are learned behaviors the best way we have to help the children develop acceptable social skills is by offering them many consistent and constant examples. We accomplish this by interacting with each child individually and in groups throughout the day. We use positive reinforcement as an effective tool to help teach the children acceptable behaviors. Praise is given to children who show respect for themselves, for others, and for their environment. The goal of discipline is to help the child develop inner controls so that he/she may move toward appropriate social behavior. Methods for resolving conflicts are positive guidance, setting clear limits, and redirection. When disputes arise among children or between a child and teacher, the teacher will encourage a talking out process among those involved. The goal of this is talking out process will be acknowledge feelings and find solutions using children’s ideas whenever possible.

A child who may be overly aggressive or is repeatedly destructive of other children’s work may be asked to make a activity choice in another area if talking things through has not resulted in better self-control.

It is forbidden to use physical punishment of any kind. The Center adheres to a Zero Tolerance policy. The staff shall never use abusive, neglectful, corporal,

humiliating, frightening, or demeaning punishment or language at any time while disciplining the children. No physical restraints are allowed unless necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or others. The only time any child would ever be separated from the group would be if we thought that they were in danger of hurting themselves or others. At this time we would ask the child to sit quietly for a few moments to reflect on the situation. The child is able to rejoin the group as soon as they are able to tell us that they understand why what occurred was unacceptable. We also ask the child to try to give us an example of what they feel might be a better way to deal with a similar situation in the future. No child would ever be asked to sit for more than two minutes. Infants and toddlers would never have a time out. This policy is reviewed yearly with all staff members upon employment and also at our March staff meeting.

#### **Child Abuse and Neglect Policies and Procedures**

The Little Explorers Child Development Center has a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of all children enrolled in our facility. All staff review these policies and procedures bi-annually and are required to attend at least one seminar or workshop per year addressing child abuse, how to identify abuse, and the affects of abuse and neglect on child development. All staff persons are mandated reporters. A mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any child has been abused or has had a nonaccidental physical injury or is place at imminent risk of serious harm must report the abuse to the Department of Children and Families. An oral report shall be made within 12 hours. Within 48 hours of making the oral report the mandated reporter shall submit a written report to the Commissioner of Children and Families. The DCF Hotline phone number is posted in each classroom, the staff break room, and the main office. (1-800-842-2288) Once the abuse is reported the Director will inform the parent or guardian of the child. It would also be determined if medical attention is necessary. Our Nurse Consultant would be notified and available if necessary. If a mandated reporter fails to report suspected abuse they could be fined up to \$500. Staff who report abuse are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting abuse or neglect. All reports are documented with the incident recorded and signed by staff member and director. Parents will be informed of the Centers abuse and neglect policy and procedures upon enrollment in the parent handbook.

#### ***Steps to report a suspected case of abuse or neglect***

- Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at 1-800-842-2288.
- Call the Department of Public Health at 1-800-282-6063, 1-800-439-0437 or 1-860-509-8045.
- The reporter's name is required, but may be kept confidential.
- Information needed:
  - Name of child
  - Address of child
  - Phone number of child
  - Name of parents or guardians
  - Address of parents or guardians
  - Phone number of parents or guardians

- Relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicators, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect
- Exact description of what the reporter has observed
- Time and date of incident
- Information about previous injuries, if any
- Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
- Name of any person suspected of causing injury
- Any information reporter believes would be helpful
- Any action taken to help or treat the child
- Seek medical attention for the child – if needed

Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF-136) to DCF. Staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e).

All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the Center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF – 136 shall also be kept on file. The administration is responsible to protect the children (including notification of the parent or guardian) once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child enrolled in the program or facility.

Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF's investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the employee would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed to return to work.

Staff will be required to attend bi-annual staff meetings, held in September and February, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of the mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.

A copy of this policy will be included in our parent information packet, and each family will be given a copy upon enrollment. A copy of this policy will also be posted on the parent board.

When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the Director will immediately inform the parents or guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child's parents to access the cause of the child's injuries and offer support and guidance.

### **Access to Facility**

**Parents are welcome on the premises at any time during the day or week. Please arrange to visit your child's classroom to play or read with the children. We love to have "Mystery Guests" come to our classrooms to share a special talent or skill as well. Share your heritage, your woodworking skill, your music, or your friendly presence and help us solve puzzles, or build with blocks!**

**It is important that you speak to your child's teacher before you plan an activity for your child's classroom because we want to fulfill NAEYC accreditation criteria for Developmentally Appropriate Practice. Information regarding best practice is**

**available from the school through the director or from research articles and book excerpts distributed in cubbies or posted on bulletin boards.**

Before beginning the program, parents are encouraged to come and spend several mornings in the classroom with your child's teacher. This is a great chance to observe the classroom first hand and to ask any questions that might arise about the classroom schedule or routine. Please be sure to share any strong likes or dislikes your child has so that their first day at Little Explorers is enjoyable for you and your child. Parents will be encouraged to separate from their children in order to allow for growth in independence. Parents do not regularly assist in the classroom; but are welcomed into the classroom to share family or religious traditions, a particular talent, a story, or simply to observe the class day. **We need your help in our classroom using the Accreditation surveys as a way for us to reflect on our environment and practices.**

### **Statement of Inclusion**

Child enrollment and termination policies protect children's rights as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act. We provide programs designed to nurture children to grow and to challenge them to each learn as an individual with a unique learning style and way of responding to the world. We make reasonable accommodations to include children with special needs. We carefully consider whether or not we can provide the care the children need without additional staff and without staff care away from other children.

If we feel our program cannot meet the need of a particular child, families would be given the necessary referrals to the programs available in the community for children with special needs.

Our child care center does not discriminate against any families on any legally-recognized basis including, but not limited to, race, color, religion, sex, national origin.

### **Daily Schedule and Yearly Curriculum**

Each program area follows a daily schedule and yearly curriculum that is designed appropriately for the age of the children enrolled. Each program area provides children numerous opportunities for individual, small group, and large group activities throughout each day. Daily schedules are posted in each classroom area. A weekly notice is sent home with each preschool child highlighting the topic of curriculum, stories, music, and other important information. For the youngest infants and toddlers a daily log is kept for the parents each day.

We do not follow exactly any on curriculum, but rather an evolving mix of what we feel is the best of many. We use ideas of the Bank Street Method, the Creative Curriculum, and the Emergent Curriculum. We incorporate the theories of Lev Vygotsky and his ideas of "scaffolding" of learning to help children achieve beyond their "zone of proximal development", and of psychologist and educational theorist Howard Gardner and his ideas of teaching to the "Multiple Intelligences" of each child. We try to use art, nature, music, movement, math, language, logic, inter-and intra- personal relations in our approach with children.

Teaching young children is a creative process that addresses all aspects of a child's development: social-emotional, cognitive, creative and physical. We arrange rooms to promote interest centers, and equip each center thematically so that children explore materials that promote the development of large and small motor, imaginative and cognitive skills. From the Bank Street Method we take the idea that cognitive growth

cannot be separated from the growth of social and personal processes. The school is an active community, connected to the social world of which it is a part, rather than an isolated place for “learning lessons”. We invite local community members; police, fire, dental hygienist to our classroom.

From Creative Curriculum we take the stages of development: to trust others outside the family, to gain independence and self-control and to take initiative and assert themselves in socially acceptable ways. We enhance and foster this development by following a consistent schedule, interacting with each child during the day, having materials available in the classroom that are developmentally appropriate to play with, praising their efforts and allowing them to explore the environment freely. We also encourage make-believe play, help them channel their frustrations and encourage them to see tasks through to completion.

We use Emergent Curriculum to develop our themes around the interest of the children. Throughout the year we will explore a variety of themes and topics with the children. Some topics include: shapes and colors; seasons, nature, multicultural celebrations, transportations, community helpers, Fire prevention, the Post Office, letters, numbers, nursery rhymes, animals, and our senses. In preschool many of our topics are selected from the Core Knowledge Sequences for Kindergarten.

We also allow the curriculum to emerge from the children’s experiences. If a child has just been to Florida and seen sea turtles, we will turn the classroom into a study of turtles for the day. Perhaps a child is fascinated with dinosaurs. We’ll read stories together and play dinosaurs in different centers.

Our goal is for your child to develop a frame of reference of ideas, knowledge, problem solving, motor and social skills that will prepare her for a lifetime of learning.

### **Program Objectives**

The program objectives are to develop self-esteem, independence, listening skills, stimulate imagination, develop social skills, particularly inner controls, develop gross motor skills, develop fine motor skills, and to develop cognitive skills based on individual readiness.

We develop self-esteem through specific praise and providing opportunity for a sense of achievement with developmentally appropriate projects such as collages, painting and coloring.

We develop independence by offering the children an appropriate choice of play centers such as puzzles, blocks, housekeeping or books.

We work on listening skills at circle time, story time, yoga and music. We work on social skills and inner controls with positive supervision of free play in the classroom and on the playground by suggesting ways to share and stressing problem solving between the children and not enforcement by adults.

We help to stimulate imagination by providing the means of imaginative play with blocks, play dough, paint, sand, housekeeping corner, and not providing “entertainment”. Teachers are available and alert to the trends of the children’s imaginative play and offer suggestions to promote discovery by a naturally curious child.

Gross motor control is encouraged through play on the playground apparatus such as climbing the slide, as well as running and throwing balls.

Fine motor control is developed by daily opportunities to use brushes, glue, crayons or markers and scissors. Puzzles and lacing toys are also included.

An individualized program to develop cognitive skills such as color, number and letter recognition is available through games, puzzles and pictures on the wall, circle time talks and stories. Concepts such as shapes, quantity, opposites, and rhyming are explored in projects, puzzles, stories and songs. Science is investigated with stories, projects, planting and cooking, and for preschoolers Mad Science.

### **Parent/Teacher Relationships**

Communication between the family and the center is the best way to ensure a positive experience for the children. Parents are their child's first teachers, and this experience provides valuable insight into behaviors, learning styles, motivations, and other individual facets of the child. We can interact more freely if the parents openly share these insights with us.

We, in turn, will share our knowledge of child development, and our experiences in child care with parents. Our teachers will also share their insights into the child's ability to interact with peers and adults in a group setting.

We can do our job better if the lines of communication are always open and parents keep us apprised of any changes at home that may affect the child – for example: the parents are going away, the birth of a baby, a serious illness or death in the family, the death of a pet, or a separation or divorce. These types of experiences are sure to have an effect on the child. If made aware of these changes, we will be able to respond more appropriately, and provide support and guidance to the child. Be assured that confidentiality will always be maintained.

Parents may share brief comments with the teachers as they drop off their children. If parents need more time with the teacher, they may schedule a conference with the teacher or the director.

If the parent alternative is dropping off and picking up the child, developing and maintaining these lines of communication can become particularly challenging. We will make a valiant effort to make sure both the parent and the parent alternates are kept up to date.

Program information is shared in a number of ways: newsletters, notices, monthly calendars, bulletin boards, and occasional telephone calls. Parents should read these carefully. They contain important information to know.

Here are some suggestions for working with the staff:

1. **Asking questions about your child.** Our staff is well schooled in child development and have many years of experience working with young children. If you have a question about your child's behavior, whether it happens at school, home or elsewhere, you can and should use your child's teacher as a resource. Teachers will also seek parents' specific ideas for working with children in the school.
2. **Parent-teacher conferences.** Teachers hold scheduled conferences in the spring to discuss your child's development. They provide observations on skills and behaviors in all key areas (for instance, social interaction, gross motor, and fine motor skills). Conferences may be requested by the teacher or parent at any time.
3. **How we assess your child.** Assessments are an integral part of our program, which we use to support children's learning. By using our observations of your children, developmental checklists, and portfolio samplings of children's work over time, we can tailor our activities to help your child develop in the four developmental domains: Personal/Social; Cognitive (Language and

Literacy/Math and Science); Creative Expression/Aesthetic Development (visual and performing arts) and Motor (small and large muscles). We do not usually administer any standardized “tests”. We use the State of Connecticut Benchmarks and Creative Curriculum Assessment Tool Kit to assess growth. Families are an integral part of the assessment process, helping to set goals with the teacher for their children, and providing information on the child that may not be observable in school. Much of what our teachers do is “capture” your child’s milestones by observing play. We formally collect the information in a portfolio, which we keep for each child. We use developmental checklists. If we have any concerns about your child’s development we will speak to you privately about them, and help you to have your child’s needs assessed by the support services in your community. All assessments are kept confidential, and any reports the teachers or administration submit with your permission are kept confidential and locked in a file in the office.

4. **Teacher-parent problem resolution.** If you feel you have a problem with your child’s teacher, we encourage you to first discuss it with the teacher directly. However, if this approach is not satisfactory for any reason, please contact the Director. The Director will work with you and the teacher to bring about resolution. If for any reason this approach does not meet your needs, the owners are available to hear your concerns or complaints.

If you feel that your concerns are not addressed, the State of Connecticut provides a formal complaint procedure through the Department of Health Services’ Day Care Licensing Unit.

5. **Asking questions about the school.** If you have any questions about the operation of the school, your teacher may be able to answer them. However, many questions about tuition, operations, administration, and other issues may need to be answered by the Director, the Assistant Director, or the owners. Newsletters are published every two months. Important notices about special events and day to day happenings are distributed in the children’s cubbies, and posted on bulletin boards in the hallways and classrooms. Accidents and injuries are reported both verbally, either by telephone or in person, and in writing with an “Accident/Incident” report form. Please feel free to call any time with questions.
6. **Annual Survey.** Each year the school requests your feedback through an anonymous survey. This survey helps us to reflect on our practices and to plan for improvements to the school. It is important that all parents participate by responding to the survey, which is required to achieve Nationally Accredited Status. We share the results of the survey in our Monthly Newsletter. You are welcome at any time to view the actual surveys and how they are tabulated by making an inquiry to the office.

### **Safety Measures**

Safety is of the utmost concern to us all. We work very hard to maintain the safest environment possible for your children. Little Explorer Child Development Center complies with all the local and state health and safety regulations. In addition to this we monitor everyone entering the center daily. Please notify us ahead of time if you will be having an authorized person pick up your child. We will ask this person for

identification and will also check for verification on the Authorization Form which was completed during enrollment. Children will not be dismissed without prior consent from a parent.

Attendance is taken daily in each classroom. We ask that if your child is not going to be attending school for any reason that you notify us. If we do not hear from you a staff member will call your home to be sure everything is fine. Each teacher is assigned a particular group of children that they are directly responsible for each day. Children are accounted for throughout the day by that person and after all transition times.

A minimum of one caregiver in each room is certified in safety and first aid procedures. If a minor injury occurs, qualified first aid staff will administer appropriate first aid, and an accident report will be filled out and signed by the teacher, director and parent.

In the event of a more serious injury we will make every effort to contact you or the emergency contact person on your form. In case of an acute medical emergency we will call 911. If needed, your child will be transported to the hospital by the local EMS accompanied by a familiar staff member.

Health and safety procedures and policies apply indoors, out doors, and on walks.

### **Babysitting Policy**

Little Explorers discourages its employees from accepting extracurricular babysitting jobs from parents at our school. Our teachers are child care professionals and deserve to be treated as such. Our teachers are much more than baby-sitters during the day, and should not be viewed as such by parents. In addition, after spending a busy day with children at the school, all employees need free time away from the children and vice-versa. Please do not ask our employees to baby-sit for your children.

Little Explorers will not be held responsible for any action or circumstances resulting from any interaction between its employees and customers that occur away from the school.

### **Bathroom and Changing Procedures**

Teachers must accompany the children to the bathroom. If a pre-school child asks for assistance the teacher is only allowed to unbutton, unzip or undo belts. Children must pull down their own pants and underwear and get onto the toilet themselves. After using the toilet the children must wipe themselves, flush the toilet, and pull up their own underwear and pants or stockings. Teachers will assist children, if needed, in pulling up their underwear, pants or stockings. Teachers must make sure that each child wash and dry their hands after using the bathroom. Parents, please remember to dress your child in a way that is conducive to them being able to accomplish their own toilet needs. Overalls or clothing with snaps is not appropriate attire for children who are toilet trained or are in the process. We encourage all three year olds to wear underwear and use the toilet to meet their needs while at school. Teachers are allowed to assist toddlers if needed. Infants and toddlers in diapers will be changed as needed and both caregivers and children will wash their hands with soap and warm water before and after being changed or using the toilet.

## Toilet Learning Policy

We focus on diapering and toileting in our program because they are such rich opportunities for spending one-on-one time with your child in our group setting. Through these daily routines we can help your child feel good about his or her body. We can also help your child feel proud and competent about using the toilet and about becoming more independent.

These are the steps we take when deciding to toilet train:

- ❖ We watch for the signs children are ready.
  - Staying dry for long periods of time.
  - Wanting to sit on the toilet with their clothes on.
  - Telling you they have a wet or soiled diaper
  - Being able to remove their clothing by themselves or with a little assistance.
  - Saying they want to use the toilet.
  
- ❖ We encourage children persistently and calmly, but without shame and undue pressure, to use the toilet.
  
- ❖ We remind children to go to the toilet frequently. That way they won't get so involved in what they are doing that they forget and have an accident. We take advantage of group potty time so children can see and learn from one another.
  
- ❖ We applaud children's successes without overdoing it.
  
- ❖ We allow children to see what they have produced and invite them to help flush it away if they choose to.
  
- ❖ We treat accidents matter- of- factly.

## How we can work together

- ❖ *Please provide us with fresh diapers and dry clothes for your child.* This will free us to focus on your child's needs during diapering and toileting, rather than searching for supplies.
- ❖ *Let's talk about approaches to helping children learn to use the toilet.* How we each do this is , in large part, determined by our own childhood experiences and our culture. Talking together will let us build on the similarities in our approaches and work out any differences we may have.
- ❖ *Keep in touch with how things are going.* This will allow each of us to have a clear picture of how your child is doing. We can then make the decisions about ways to give your child the support he or she needs.
- ❖ *Remember that accidents are to be expected.* Learning to use the toilet takes time. Even children who can use the toilet successfully may have accidents in response to stresses at home or in child care. Having realistic expectations allows us to respond to accidents matter or factly and address issues causing stress, as necessary. Over time children will learn to use the toilet. We all did.

By keeping a sense of perspective and a sense of humor, we can give your child the time and support needed to learn to use the toilet.

### **Toys From Home**

We ask that your child keep his/her own toys at home. With many children in our classroom these special toys can be easily lost or broken and are especially difficult to share. We cannot accept responsibility for their safekeeping.

“Show and Tell” may be a part of your child’s curriculum. Children should bring only one item that fits in their cubbie. We also recommend that it not have a significant personal or financial value. Of course a soft stuffed animal or doll is always welcome to rest with.

### **Holidays and Celebrations**

Holidays, seasonal and other celebrations are fun for children and adults alike. Understanding when and how families, other than our own, celebrate special days enriches our life experience. We incorporate holidays that are important to our children and their families. Each of us reflects our own ethnic identity in our every day lives in our celebrations. This sharing is one small step toward appreciating and respecting the similarities and differences among us.

We ask that you please take a moment to fill out the Parent Involvement Questionnaire that you received in you enrollment packet. This will help us plan activities and shape a curriculum that celebrates all children in our care.

### **Procedures for Handling Atypical Development and Challenging Behaviors**

Children’s development and behavior is taken seriously at Little Explorers. We feel strongly that it is the responsibility of our staff and administration to provide a safe, supportive and developmentally appropriate program to all children to the highest degree possible. Therefore, we will adhere to the following policy on the management of children with atypical development and/or challenging behaviors.

#### **Definitions:**

Atypical development shall be defined as that which does not meet established norms for children of the same age group in any of the domains of development including physical, language, motor, self-help, cognitive, and social/emotional domains. Challenging behaviors shall be defined as aggression such as biting, hitting, pushing, kicking or other potentially dangerous acts toward other children or staff. Also foul language, inability to follow rules and comply with directives, escaping the classroom, outbursts and tantrums, disruption of classroom activities or any act which endangers the health and safety of self or others, damages property, or disrupts program quality. The step-by-step process for assessing, referring, and accommodating children with atypical development and/or challenging behaviors is as follows:

1. Teachers will bring concerns about a child’s development immediately to the attention of the director who will document those concerns and place them in the child’s confidential file. Parents will be notified when any behavior of the child is in question. At the director’s discretion, an education, health or mental health consultant who has contracted with the program can be contacted for the purpose

of advice on assessing, referring, managing and/or accommodating the behavior/development of concern. In many cases, such informal guidance is enough to handle those concerns satisfactorily. Parents will be informed about how these issues will be addressed at the center before there are any modifications to the child's program and to share the recommendations of any consultant.

2. In the event that the child's development remains of concern, the parent will be Informed by the director. At this time, it will be the responsibility of the parent to seek evaluation services through one of the following choices:
  - Health care specialist (if a physical concern) of the parent's choice
  - Mental Health professional (if a behavioral concern) of parent's choice
  - Public school early intervention/special education programs (children over 3)
  - Connecticut's Birth to Three System (for children under 3)
  - Public services (Help Me Grow, Early Childhood Consultation Partnership, etc.)

Any fees related to such evaluations shall be the sole responsibility of the family unless otherwise agreed upon in advance by the child care program. Parents will be required to submit evidence of contact/appointment with such services within one week of the referral or the child's attendance will be suspended until the evidence of contact has been made. The program agrees to cooperate with consultants and professionals in allowing them to make assessments of the child and his/her educational environment on-site. No information about the child will be provided to these agencies or individuals without parent's signed consent.

3. The parent agrees to provide the results and recommendations of assessments to the center for the purposes of appropriate program planning for the child. This information may be presented in writing or in a personal meeting between the parent, center staff, and outside agency or professional. Any cost of such planning meetings will be the responsibility of the parent unless otherwise agreed upon. The center agrees to follow professional recommendations regarding the accommodation and support of the child's development to the greatest extent possible while maintaining program integrity and within budgetary, regulatory, or building restrictions that would prohibit making modifications or accommodations to the program. The parent agrees to provide a copy of an IFSP or IEP and permission for the program to communicate with special education Personnel and therapists for the purpose of consistency and support in a detailed plan of care as required by DPH. This program is fully compliant with the ADA. Support service professionals, therapists, and special educators will have full access and cooperation to provide services on site during regular business hours provided they are oriented and agree to follow program policies and procedures. Program transitions will be facilitated by the center in cooperation with other service agencies and transportation systems.
4. A re-evaluation of the success of any recommendations will take place at a time set by the director, generally 7 to 30 days from implementation of any recommendations. At that time, a determination will be made to either continue

successful programming, modify programming for another 7 to 30 days, or recommend an alternate placement for the child. In such cases, or in the case of non-compliance with this policy, parents will have 2 weeks to make new arrangements unless the child is a danger to himself or others, or disruptive to program quality in which case dismissal from the program shall be immediate.

5. The method and schedule for continual monitoring of the child's growth and development will be determined by the director and will be dependent on the effectiveness of the program for the child. Parents have the right to access any information regarding their child's program and/or development and will be immediately informed should any issues of concern occur. Parents will have the right to make on-site visits at any time the program is in session.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

We supply two snacks a day, one morning and one afternoon. We only serve nutritious foods such as raw vegetables, fruits, 100% fruit juices or milk. Snack menus are posted in each classroom. **Parents are responsible to send a nutritionally balanced lunch for their children each day.** An example of this would be a protein entrée, with a bread or grain product, a fresh or frozen vegetable, a piece of fruit, and milk or juice. Children who are old enough to do so should be encouraged in planning their own lunches. We will do our best to follow your instructions for feeding. We ask that you only send foods that are of nutritional value to school. Candy and other non-nutritious snacks are not appropriate choices. We will not force children to eat certain foods or amounts of foods at any time. It is our belief that even a small amount of a well-balanced meal is better than an entire portion of an unhealthy choice. Please do not forget to include the proper utensils (clearly labeled) a drink and a napkin. In order to maintain the healthiest environment possible we only use disposable products. Please remember to label all items including lunch boxes, silverware, and containers. We are not responsible for any items that are not clearly marked.

**Attention: We are a peanut and tree nut free school. Please do not bring in any lunches with any peanut or nut products in them. Food items that have been processed or package on a conveyor belt with nut products will not be opened and served to your child. i.e. peanut butter. Thank you.**

*Please note that due to the presence of life-threatening allergies, all food brought in by parents for special snacks must be fresh or whole fruits or vegetables, or commercially prepared packaged goods in factory sealed containers with clear labeling indicating all ingredients.*

Parents are responsible to make and bring all bottles for their baby. We also serve baby food as long as it has been introduced to the infant at home first. Parents are responsible to supply clean utensils and bibs daily. These items should be clearly labeled.

### **Plan for Consultation**

The Little Explorers Child Development Center has contracted with an early childhood educational consultant, a licensed registered nurse, a licensed dental hygienist, and a Social Service Consultant in order that they may advise and support our program, staff and parents each year. Each shall be available to make an annual review of pertinent policies and in-service educational programs; be available by

telecommunication for advice regarding problems; be available to visit the center, staff or parents to consult either individually or as a program seminar. Consultants are not members of our staff, although parents may feel free to consult with our staff as their first resource for advice or help.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Medical Emergencies**

In case of a medical emergency Little Explorers uses one or more of the following procedures.

1. Administer immediate first aid and/or CPR.
2. Contact 911
3. Contact our nurse consultant
4. Contact parent or authorized relation
5. Contact the child's physician
6. A staff member accompanies the child to the hospital and stays with the child until the parent arrives.
7. If necessary the child will be taken to Danbury Hospital unless otherwise indicated on Emergency Release Form (enclosed).

To maintain proper child/teacher ratio if a classroom teacher leaves the classroom the Director or the floater teacher will help cover the classroom where the medical emergency has occurred.

### **Fire Emergencies**

1. The children are led out the nearest exit by the Assistant Teachers and are kept a safe distance from the building so as not to impede the fire department.
2. The Head Teachers check the classroom to be sure all exited; turn off all lights; close all doors; bring the attendance book and emergency numbers outside the building with them.
3. The children and staff remain outside the building until the Fire Department determines it is safe to return. If we cannot return to the building, we will take the children to Newtown High School, located across the street from the preschool. Infants will be transported in cribs equipped with wheels. Parents would be called from there.

### **Weather Emergencies**

In case of inclement weather, parents are asked to listen to WEBE 108 FM, WICC 600AM. or watch channel 8 or 3 for closings or delays. If inclement weather occurs when children are already at the center, the center will call all parents to inform them of closing due to weather emergencies. If we cannot reach the parent the alternate pick up telephone numbers will be called.

### **Evacuation Emergency**

If an emergency situation arises or Newtown officials request an evacuation of the building the fire emergency procedure would occur.

1. The children are led out the nearest exit by the Assistant Teachers and are kept a safe distance from the building so as not to impede the fire department.
2. The Head Teachers check the classroom to be sure all exited; turn off all lights; close all doors; bring the attendance book and emergency numbers outside the building with them.

3. The children and staff remain outside the building until the Fire Department determines it is safe to return. If we cannot return to the building, we will take the children to Newtown High School, across the street from the preschool. Parents would be called from there. We also have the option of using the Coldwell and Walsh building which is located at 17 Berkshire Road; this building is owned by our landlord. It is a safe location and resources are available.

**Lock Down Procedure**

Little Explorers will be notified by the Newtown Board of Education or the Newtown Police Department as to any situation that may require us to lock down the building. Our center is locked at all times. However, during a lock down no one would be permitted to enter or leave the building. All children will be taken to Preschool 2 classroom, the center of the building, away from windows and doors. The lock down would be lifted when we are notified by the police or Board of Education. We will let parent's know of the situation by phone or letter.

## **HEALTH POLICIES**

### **Parent Responsibilities**

Please inform us if your child has been sick over the weekend, or has not slept well or was ill during the previous night, so that we can monitor your child more closely during the day.

If a parent is called to pick up a child who is ill they must pick up the child within an hour.

Please honor the day care Health Policies regarding illness in the center; exclusion from child care center; medication administration and authorization, and immunizations and history and physicals of your child.

### **Exclusion From Little Explorers Child Care Center:**

- General Illness: If your child becomes sick during the day, they will be sent home. They must remain at home for the next full day.
- Rashes, Diarrhea or Vomiting: Unless otherwise noted by a physician in writing, all diarrhea or suspicious rashes are considered contagious. If your doctor determines, in writing, that the cause is not contagious, a child can return to day care with a note from the doctor. Otherwise, a child must be home twenty four (24) hours without vomiting or diarrhea before returning to the center.
- Fever: If your child has a fever of 101.0 degrees or above they cannot attend the center. Their temperature must be normal for 24 hours before returning to the center.
- Cough: Coughs that are persistent, deep, croupy or congested, should not attend the center.
- Discharge from the nose: A clear discharge may be from colds, allergies, or teething. If the discharge is moderate and can be attributed to teething or allergy your child will be allowed to attend the center. However, if a child has a consistent runny nose, which is difficult from contaminating toys, clothing, etc. your child will be sent home. If your child doesn't feel well and has a consistently runny nose, or nasal discharge that is cloudy and NOT clear, he should remain out of the center.
- Special Situations: We will accept notes from the child's doctor for a child's return to the center only after the doctor has physically examined the child. However, if your doctor's recommendations for return conflicts with our health policies, our policies will prevail over the doctor's recommendation for that particular situation.
- These exclusion policies are for the protection of all children in the center. It is what you would expect of other parents to protect your child from unnecessary illness.
- Other communicable diseases or conditions will be dealt with according to the Town Health Department guidelines, for instance head lice, chicken pox. Strep throat, etc.

### **Child Care Center Responsibilities**

If your child has a fever of 101 degrees or above while at school, they must be picked up and brought home. Their temperature must be normal (Tylenol free) for 24 hours before returning to the center. However, if we discover your child's temperature is at 100.0 degrees we will call you to let you know, but pick up is not required.

1. The center will use reasonable care to protect your child from unnecessary exposure to illness. Enforcing our health policies is an effective method to accomplish this.
2. We will notify parents of possible epidemics in the center, such as chicken pox, head lice, etc.
3. We will renew our training in First Aid, Infection Control and CPR as required for certification.
4. We will practice appropriate infection control procedures such as hand washing and disinfection of equipment.

**General Health Policies:**

1. Children must have up-to-date immunizations. If your child is getting immunizations you must bring a note signed by the doctor's office stating the date and type of immunization given.
2. A completed physical examination form must be updated yearly.

## **PARENTAL AGREEMENT FORM**

After you have reviewed the handbook, please sign and submit the attached Parental Agreement Form to show that you have read and understand everything in this handbook. If you have any questions regarding any of our policies, please contact our office and we would be happy to help you.

Thank you for choosing Little Explorer Child Development Center. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

**PARENTAL AGREEMENT FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have carefully read, discussed and fully understand all the policies and procedures in the Little Explorer Child Development Center's Parent Handbook, which includes:

1. Illness Guidelines
2. Payment Obligations
3. Vacation and Closing Procedures
4. Daily Operating Procedures
5. Discipline Policy

I also understand that Little Explorers reserves the right to change any of these policies or change in tuition rates with a 30 day written notification.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_