



# FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Welcome to Little Scholars Learning Center! We are pleased that you are considering our school. We look forward to sharing with you in the development of your child's body and mind.

While our staff has considerable training and education about children in general, we are eager to learn from your expertise and knowledge about your child, family, and culture. You are your child's first teacher. Our goal is to be inclusive of all cultures, ethnicities, languages, family structures, genders, and abilities. We invite your input and participation as an advocate for your child and family, as well as for the community of children and families. This handbook is offered as a means of familiarizing you with the policies and procedures of the Learning Center. It will also help you understand our program and goals for our children.

### **LICENSING**

Little Scholars Learning Center is licensed by the City of Chicago and by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN VISITS**

Little Scholars is open to you, the parent/guardian, any time your child is present in the center. For the safety of all the children, we do require that you make your presence known to the person in charge, and cooperate in not disrupting the center's program.

### **FORMS**

Upon enrollment your child(ren) will need all forms completed in a timely manner. All forms necessary will be provided by the center. Information on forms regarding your child(ren) or specific center forms must be updated as needed.

### **TUITION PAYMENTS**

Attendance at Little Scholars is on either a full-time or part-time basis. A tuition and fee schedule will be provided for your review. You will be informed of all rates, discounts, late fees, registration fees, and check return fees. The tuition and fee schedule will also provide you with information as to when payment is due and any late charges to be applied. Also, included on the tuition and fee schedule will be our center's policy of attendance explaining the number of days that require full tuition, partial tuition and vacation days allowed.

## **PROGRAMMING**

The program schedule and grouping of children at the Learning Center will change throughout the year to accommodate the number of children enrolled and to meet the individual needs of the children. Little Scholars is open to children ages 15 months to 5 years old without discrimination on the basis of religion, race, color, sex, cognitive or physical abilities.

## **NUTRITION / REST**

A nutritious breakfast, lunch, morning and afternoon snacks will be provided by our according to the USDA Food Program guidelines. The Learning Center will also provide information on the meals and snacks that will be served. Weekly menus are available for you to review. Please see the Director regarding special diets and allergies.

Children will also be given the opportunity to rest for two hours after lunch. Your child will be provided his/her own cot. A small blanket should be provided and taken home to be washed weekly. Parents of our toddlers should communicate with teachers often to determine the children's daily needs.

## **MEDICATION**

All prescribed medication must be left with the Director. A medication form must be filled out completely and signed by the parent/guardian before any medication can be given. Medications must be in the original container and labeled as follows: child's name, current date, dosage, time to be administered, expiration date, and other special instructions. Non-prescription medication must have a signed and dated note from the child's doctor stating the name of the child to receive medication, name of medication, amount to be given, times to be given and length of time to be given. Medication will ONLY be dispensed by the Director or a person designated by the Director.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

If a child becomes sick, injured or has a reaction to medication while at the center, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately. If it is necessary to seek immediate medical attention for a child, the child will be transported to the nearest medical facility. The child's forms along with emergency medical permission forms and health information file will accompany the child.

In the event of an occurrence of a communicable disease as outlined by the Department of Health, written notification will be posted on the desk in the front office.

## **CLOTHING & OTHER SUPPLIES**

Children should wear washable play clothing. Please be sure to dress your child appropriately for weather conditions. Shoes should also be comfortable so that children can safely run, jump and play. You are required to supply the center with the following supplies (if applicable):

- ⇒ Disposable diapers or training pants
- ⇒ Ointment to be used when diapering
- ⇒ Disposable wipes for diapering

- ⇒ An extra set of weather appropriate clothing (Clothing must be labeled with your child's name)
- ⇒ Your child's favorite blanket
- ⇒ A small tube of children's toothpaste

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Children are required to leave toys, food, gum, jewelry and money at home. The toys at Little Scholars are shared by all children as a part of their learning experience. Lack of concern about one's own toys being lost or broken enables the child to participate more fully in our educational environment. Little Scholars provides an ample supply of toys, materials and foods for the day. For these reasons, we kindly ask you to assist in keeping the above items at home. Little Scholars Learning Center is not responsible for any lost belongings.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

We enjoy being a part of your child's special day celebrations and like to recognize birthdays during the day of the birthday. A good time to celebrate would be after lunch. You are invited to bring cake or cup cakes and are always invited to join us.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Little Scholars enjoys giving pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children the opportunity to learn about the community by providing exciting, recreational and educational field trips. In all cases, we need your signed transportation authorization, which we will retain in your child's file. You will be notified in advance of all scheduled field trips.

### **ARRIVING TO THE LEARNING CENTER**

Our responsibility begins when you place your child in the care of a Little Scholars staff member. Under no circumstance should your child be allowed to find his/her own way into the center. We encourage you to accompany your child into his/her classroom. This provides a smooth transition and allows you a brief exchange with the teacher to convey/receive information about your child. Please escort your child to wash his hands as soon as you arrive each day. You are also required to sign your child in and out each day.

### **LEAVING THE CENTER**

Security at the Learning Center is enhanced by locked doors at all times, monitored fire alarm system and fenced playground. Children are supervised at all times and no child is released to anyone except the persons authorized by the enrolling parent. Safety is emphasized regularly in staff meetings and in every classroom.

## **UNUSUAL INCIDENTS**

In the rare instance of an unusual incident (power outage, flood) which occurs prior to the opening of the center, the following plan will be initiated:

- ⇒ All affected families would be contacted using the contact information to inform them of the status of the problem, a proposal timeline for the reopening of the center. Little Scholars has monitored fire alarm system and written policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies. We schedule, carry out and document monthly fire drills. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

Little Scholars will participate in your efforts to toilet train your child, so please let us know any details. When your child is enrolled to the center, we ask you to inform us of your child's toilet habits and the likelihood of accidents. Please provide us with disposable diapers, wipes and extra changes of clothing.

## **POSITIVE GUIDANCE**

Our positive guidance policies and procedures will help children learn appropriate behavior. Children are presented with positive models of acceptable behavior. Behavior guidance standards are based upon developmental needs of children. Redirection and constructive solution techniques are used by staff. Children are taught to use acceptable alternatives such as problem solving and critical thinking skills in an effort to reduce conflict. All children and staff members will be protected and provided a safe and secure environment. Parents or guardians are required to obey the Little Scholars Discipline Policy any time they are on the center property.

## **DISMISSAL POLICY**

Our staff will work with each child to fulfill the needs of that child and every effort will be made to provide a positive learning experience. Special needs will be accommodated when possible. Little Scholars reserves the right to ask parents to make alternative arrangements for care if it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met, or the child has not adjusted to the group care provided by the center. In the event behavior becomes disruptive to the program or becomes a problem that poses an unsafe situation for the child or other children in the class, alternative arrangements will be required. If you, as a parent, are uncooperative in completing and returning required forms, fail to pay tuition on time, fail to follow any city and/or state regulations or fail to follow any Little Scholars policies or procedures, it may be necessary to dismiss your child from the center. A two weeks written notice will be given upon dismissal.

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

The State of Illinois requires childcare providers to report any suspected incident of possible child abuse or neglect. Child abuse includes leaving a child unattended at any time. We are legally obligated to comply with these guidelines.

## **CONFERENCES**

Conferences between parents and teachers will be held regularly. If you wish to have a conference about your child, please inform the Director or teacher in charge. We encourage open communication between parents and teachers.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit and observe their children any time. There are several areas in the center for parents to find information about the program and special events happening at the center or in the community. A parent/guardian information board is located in the office. Newsletters will also be sent home monthly. Feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you have with the director.

Parents are encouraged to:

- ⇒ Share special talents such as singing, playing an instrument, storytelling and cultural activities.
- ⇒ Work with children and teachers in their daily activities.
- ⇒ Help with parties, special activities and holidays.
- ⇒ Donate toys, books, paper and other art supplies.
- ⇒ Chaperone field trips.
- ⇒ Participate in various fundraisers to raise money toward supplies and equipment to enhance your child's learning environment.
- ⇒ Participation in the Scholastic Book Club. In addition to adding books to your child's collection, you will help us accumulate points toward acquiring free books for the learning center!

Please contact the Director if you are interested in becoming involved or have ideas for us to consider. We are open to new ideas and suggestions and encourage you to share them with us.

Little Scholars Learning Center reserves the right to change or revise any policies and/or tuition schedules when necessary. All changes/revisions will be provided to parents in writing.

Again, **WELCOME to Little Scholars Learning Center!!** We look forward to getting to know you and your child(ren)!