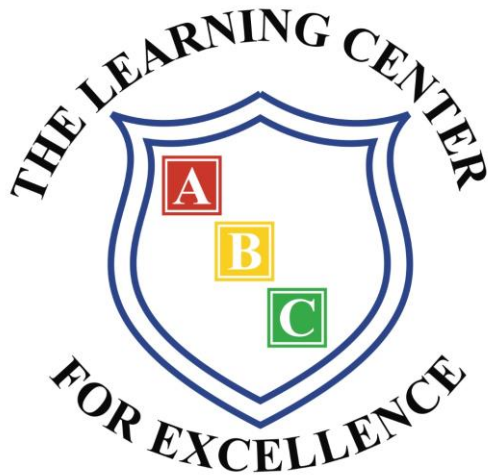


# *Parent Handbook*



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5012 West Tennessee Street

Tallahassee, Florida 32304

(850) 391-9338

*"Building Great Scholars"*



## WELCOME

We are delighted that you chose The Learning Center for Excellence for your child to begin his or her exciting learning adventures at a home away from home. Our goal is to provide a high quality, nurturing and safe learning environment for your child that will help him or her grow into a wonderful, curious, and happy person. Your children will be exposed to an exciting, theme-based program that includes many opportunities and experiences. These are designed to stimulate physical, social, and emotional growth in a loving and comfortable environment.

This handbook contains important information that will help make your child's early school experience positive. As a partner in your child's care, we will do everything in our power to keep the lines of communication open. Interaction with you the parent is as important as our interactions with your child. Feel free to come in or call at any time during the day or to set an appointment with us after hours to discuss any problems or suggestions you have with regards to your child's care. Throughout the year, we will schedule conferences at your convenience to discuss your child's progress.

## WHAT MAKES THE LEARNING CENTER SO SPECIAL?

The Learning Center has two primary goals, with different needs and goals: 1) the individual children who need developmentally appropriate early interventions and literacy rich supportive environments in order to reach their full potential and 2) By providing high academically driven program with quality and a curriculum-based developmental preschool, kindergarten readiness, integrated with early intervention strategies.

## MISSION

To offer parents a safe, educational and exciting early childcare environment for their infant to pre-school children, helping each child develop self-control and a powerful love of learning!



## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

*“Each child learns at their own pace and from their special perspective that life has created. A child’s strengths and preferences are carefully observed and built into their customized curriculum to enhance their ability to grasp new concepts and try new skills.”*

## HOURS OF OPERATION

The Learning Center is open Monday - Friday from 7:00am until 5:45pm. Toddlers 8am-5pm.

## OPEN DOOR POLICY

We welcome your involvement. Parents may visit the center at any time. If you plan to stay for a while, please get involved in class activities. The Open-Door Policy applies to all individuals approved by parents and listed on the Enrollment Application with assigned emergency contacts.

Monthly tuition rates are based on the annual cost of tuition per child, providing families with a consistent tuition rate throughout the year, rather than the rate fluctuating up for months with 31 days or down for months with 28 days or holiday closures. Because of this, no discounts are given for months with fewer days, holidays, or in-service days.

## IN-SERVICE AND HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

In-service and holiday schedules are included in your enrollment packet, listed on our website and available at the front desk.



## EMERGENCY CLOSURES

TLC follows the guidance from Leon County Schools, State of Florida and/or local emergency management officials regarding recommended closures due to weather or other unforeseen events.

If an emergency closing is necessary, parents or individuals designated as emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick up children immediately. If an emergency occurs during a time when the preschool is closed, every effort will be made to notify parents through pro-care connect messaging, email or social media.

Tuition will not be refunded during extended closures due to weather, acts of nature, pandemic, or other unforeseen events or public health emergencies.

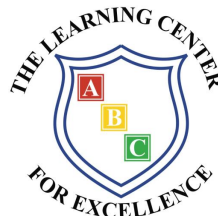
## ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENTS

### ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Learning Center enrolls children from 12 months to 5 years, based on available space and specific program eligibility requirements. Equal access is provided to agency services without discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, national origin, veteran status, religious practice, age, disability or other categories protected by law. Early Childhood education is a highly regulated industry. Because of this, the Department of Children and Families, Child Care Food Program, Accrediting Agencies, the Early Learning Coalition, and other community partners require specific paperwork, policies and health requirements.

### INITIAL ENROLLMENT / PARENT ORIENTATION

To ensure a smooth start all families must complete a family orientation prior to enrollment. At this time a member of our administrative team will finalize your family's enrollment package, discuss goals you have for your child(ren) throughout the school year, review important policies



with you and answer any questions you may have. The Registration Packet will be completed and signed including the following items BEFORE a child will be admitted into care:

- Admission information
- Authorization for emergency medical care
- Late pick-up policy
- Emergency contact form
- Emergency procedures
- Information on reporting child abuse
- Discipline and Guidance
- Open door policy
- Fee policy and payment form
- Developmental Screening permission form
- Signed Parent Handbook Acknowledgment form

## CHILD CARE APPLICATION FOR ENROLLMENT

Enrollment applications are completed prior to enrollment and updated annually in August. Parents are expected to keep the school abreast of any changes. throughout the school year to ensure the safety of each student. Please see a member of our team if you need assistance updating your family's emergency contact information. Our team will always attempt to contact the custodial parents/caregivers first. If we are unable to reach the parent or caregiver, we will contact the next emergency contact on the list.

## CURRICULUM

The Creative Curriculum® system in our program. This system includes curriculum, assessment, implementation, and evaluation, as well as professional development. All our staff have received training on the curriculum and can answer any or your questions.



The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos translates research and theory from the field of early childhood education into a practical, easy-to-understand approach to working with children and their families. It is a comprehensive curriculum with a clear organizational structure and a focus on routines and experiences.

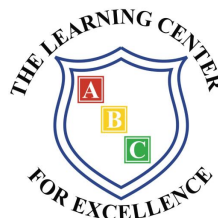
The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool balances both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interest. Resting on a firm foundation of research, it has an environmentally based approach that defines the vital role of the teacher in connecting content, teaching, and learning for preschool children and offers a practical, easy-to-understand approach to working with children and their families. It is a comprehensive curriculum with a clear organizational structure and a focus on interest areas.

Our program is a support system for children and their families. Team members are carefully selected based on education, training and experience, and classrooms are individually planned to meet the unique needs of each child. Classrooms provide a multitude of play opportunities through which each child is guided towards his/her Optimal developmental level. We use the Creative Curriculum, which is play-based and designed to provide a loving, playful, and stimulating environment. For all children, toys and materials are rotated to ensure that they are never bored and maintain their interest in their surroundings.

Children aged one and younger experience a variety of developmentally appropriate toys and materials in a language rich environment. The infant and toddler staff primarily focuses on valuable, secure experiences. Our team members promote security since this is the number one indicator of successful experiences for a toddler. Children 2 years of age and older participate in developmentally appropriate activities which are planned using specific thematic topics to enhance their learning experience. Play environments are organized into centers which are designed, equipped, and arranged to promote the child's freedom to play and develop.

Opportunities available:

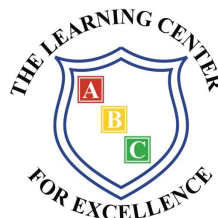
- Art and creative expression
  
- Science and discovery



- Sand and water play
- Language and reading development
- Block and transportation play
- Imaginative and dramatic play
- Music and movement
- Large and Small motor development
- Food experiences
- Math, problem solving and number concepts
- Health and safety
- Self-help routines.

Team members are focused on each child's development of self-esteem and personal independence. Children are encouraged to make choices, think independently, and to build trusting, cooperative relationships with peers and teachers through an environment that is child initiated, child-directed and teacher- scaffolding.

The daily schedule is a carefully planned balance between child-directed and teacher-guided activities. During "free play" children have the freedom to choose activities and playmates. Each child is offered large and small group experiences, one-on-one interactions, as well as time to play alone if he or she chooses. Children are encouraged to participate in activities but are never forced. The activity plan for the week is posted for your review and we encourage families to participate in our curriculum activities as often as they desire. We offer children an opportunity to play outdoors daily, weather permitting.



## THEMES & UNITS

### **August /September: Beginning the Year**

Focus: Making friends, learning school rules, getting to know my teachers, being a good friend.

### **September /October: Balls**

Focus: How balls move, different types of balls, people who use them, what they are made from.

### **November/December: Clothes**

Focus: Exploring clothing, taking care of clothes, how are clothes made, special clothes for work.

### **January/February: Buildings**

Focus: Buildings in our neighborhood, who builds buildings, what buildings are made of.

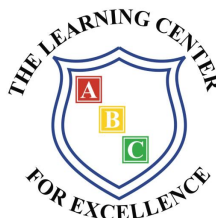
### **February/March: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

Focus: What do people throw away, where does trash go, how do trash and garbage affect us community, we reuse junk, we create less trash.

### **April/May: Trees**

Focus: Trees in my community, food from trees, who takes care of trees, how do trees change, what we

can do with parts of trees.





## **May/June: Pets**

Focus: What Kinds of animals are pets, characteristics of pets, where do pets live, who takes care of pets,

what do pets eat?

## **DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS AND EVALUATION**

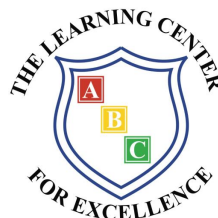
A vitally important component to our program is ongoing developmental screening and evaluation. These tools are used to ensure our teachers are meeting all your child's needs and maximizing their time at preschool. Your child will automatically receive formal screening/evaluation for developmental progress, speech development and body/fine motor/sensory processing development. The results will be shared with you at least twice a year during a conference.

## **OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES OFFERD**

Hearing and Dental Screenings is offered for any parents who wish to have one completed on their child once a year. Parents will be notified of the screenings via Brightwheel and information will be posted in classrooms and front lobby.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

We believe that when parents and teachers work as partners in a child's education, the learning experience is richer and more meaningful. Our team is here to discuss and support your student individual goals, needs, and concerns. Parents will receive a daily email with a photo and report of your student's day through our mobile app, able to easily view photos, teachers notes and reports at any time, and can even send individual notes to your child's teacher.



## BRIGHTWHEEL APP

The Learning Center uses the childcare app called Brightwheel. Brightwheel is an electronic communication tool used by our educators to inform parents about their child's day. Brightwheel is secure, reliable, and easy to use. Parents can be updated through email, text, and notifications via the Brightwheel website and mobile app. Parents are also able to pay tuition through the Brightwheel App.

## ALLERGY POLICY

The following policies and procedures regarding allergies have been developed to further protect the children in our care. These policies require the full understanding and cooperation of staff and parents.

1. Children with a history of allergies will have these problems specified by the child's health care provider on their medical information form.
2. The director will review medical forms upon enrollment with parents and if a child has a special medical need, a health plan will be developed. This plan will include written instructions from the child's physician regarding the management of his/her allergies. This written care plan must be in place within 30 days of enrollment. For children with life-threatening allergies, a care plan must be in place before the child begins attending the program.
3. All staff who works with the child will be familiar with the care plan. The plan will be posted in the classroom along with a photo of the child. The plan will be clearly marked, as well as the location of any medications or EpiPen's.
4. If the director determines that the program's food service cannot safely provide snack and/or meals, the parents will be responsible for providing substitute healthy foods, which will be served by the staff. To the extent possible, the program will provide alternative foods for special diets.



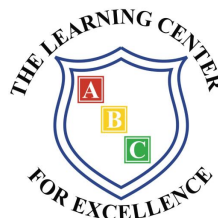
5. The care plan will be revised if medications change and will be reviewed annually.

6. An allergy list is maintained by the director for all children who are enrolled. It is posted in every classroom, in the kitchen and outside on the playground and will be included on field trips. It is revised and reviewed monthly at staff meetings.

7. The person who is responsible for food service will read all food labels to identify known allergens. No food will be served to children with allergies if a label of ingredients is not available for that product. Teachers of children with allergies will double check with the cook when food arrives in the classroom regarding the appropriateness of foods for the children with allergies. Teachers will not serve food to children with allergies if there is any doubt about the food content.

8. For children with life threatening allergies (usually peanuts) their classrooms will be clearly marked to exclude that food from the area. Other parents in the classroom will be educated about the importance of not bringing foods from home into the classroom without pre-arranging it with the teacher and making sure the foods are safe. Teachers will be aware of all foods entering the classroom (including their own food) and will exclude all foods that could contain life threatening allergies. If in doubt about any food, it must be excluded from the classroom. In these classrooms, celebrations may not include homemade foods and must include only foods that are clearly labeled for allergens. The foods will be checked before they enter the classroom. In center, wide celebrations (such as the Thanksgiving Feast) where many classrooms and parents are involved, the center cannot ensure the safety of all foods that are brought into the facility for children with allergies. For these instances, only, the child's parents are responsible for verifying and ensuring the safety of any foods that their child has access to or ingests during these events.

9. Due to the possibility of "cross-contamination" between groups, no food is allowed on any playground with the following exception: classrooms may serve food from the regular center menu in a picnic format on the playground with the following requirements: - Other classrooms sharing the playground space must be informed in advance so they can consider any



implications to their children - Teachers must take special care to clean up the area thoroughly after eating - No trash from the meal may be left outside

10. All staff members will be trained in the management of allergies and allergic reactions part of the orientation, including all substitutes and floaters. The topic will also be included in the staff's annual CPR/First Aid training as a refresher.

11. All parents must update their emergency medical information immediately upon any change in allergy conditions.

12. Staff will utilize a symptom record to document a child's symptoms, staff actions/responses and a child's response during episodes when medications are given if parents and/or physician's office or 911 is called in response to symptoms or illness. A copy of the symptom record will be sent with the children if he/she seeks medical evaluation or is taken to the hospital and a copy is kept in the child's file.

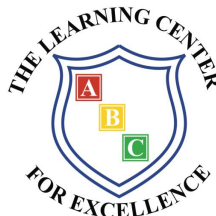
13. Classrooms that have children who are allergic to animals will not expose the child to that type of animal.

## PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

The Learning Center for Excellence does not administer prescription and non-prescription medication to the children in our program.

## SHOW & SHARE

Show and Share is a classroom activity, where children in our preschool building (3yrs-6yrs) get to bring a favorite item to school and describe it to their peers. Students are practicing communicating their thoughts and feelings building self-esteem and social skills. Please help your student choose these items carefully, as there is always a risk of the item being lost or damaged. Please avoid sending sentimental, fragile, or valuable items.



Here are a few fun show and share ideas:

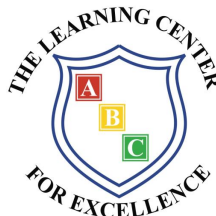
- Photo of a family member or something special
- Souvenir from vacation
- Stuffed animal
- Book
- Drawing
- Musical instrument
- Board game
- Silly socks or hat
- Something from nature
- Halloween costume or dress-up outfit
- Sports trophy
- Ticket stub from an event such as a play, movie, or concert

### SCREEN TIME

Students under the age of 3 will not participate in screen time at The Learning Center. When using the I-pad for music the screen will face away from the children to avoid screen time and increase participation. Children over the age of 2 may be shown pre-approved online books/ songs/ and videos which are no longer than 6 minutes in length. All screen time subject matter is pre-approved prior to presenting it to students.

### ON-SITE FIELD TRIPS

The Learning Center does NOT provide transportation for any reason. Because our children do not participate in field trips off campus, TLC brings excitement to them at our preschool. These presentations are engaging and relate to our curriculum studies and/or children's interests.



## HEALTH RECORDS

Per Department of Children & Families requirements, a child may not begin care at a childcare until a current Immunization record (DOH form 680-blue form) and a current Physical Record (DOH form 3040-yellow form) is on file. The immunization record must have an expiration date, unless immunizations are complete. The Physical record expires every 2 years.

Exemptions for shot records: The law allows (a) physicians to write a statement stating that the vaccine(s) required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child or any member of the child's household, and (b) parents/guardians to choose an exemption from immunization requirements for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. Schools and child-care facilities should maintain an up-to-date list of students with exemptions, so they can be excluded from attending school if an outbreak occurs.

Instructions for the affidavit to be signed by parents/guardians choosing the exemption for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief can be found at: <http://www.floridahealth.gov>

## NUTRITION

The Learning Center participates in the Child Care Food Program (CCFP). The CCFP is a child nutrition program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service. The purpose of the CCFP is to provide reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks served to children while at school. The program is administered by the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Childcare Food Programs. All meals and snacks served to children at TLC meet specific USDA meal pattern requirements. The meal pattern includes milk, fruits and vegetables, meat or meat alternatives and grains or breads in amounts specified by age.

Monthly menus are posted on the parent board in the entrance lobby, on classroom bulletin boards and distributed to parents via email. As part of enrollment, ALL parents must fill out the Child Care Food Program Eligibility form. TLC is reimbursed for ALL children enrolled. However, if your child requires an item on the menu to be substituted due to a food allergy, please complete a Child Care Food Program Medical Statement for Children with Disabilities and Special Dietary Conditions. These forms are typically completed at enrollment but can be



completed at anytime. If you need to update your child's CCFP forms, please speak to a TLC Administrator.

If you have a child with special dietary needs (vegetarian, only eats organic food or requires Almond Milk), or a food issue that TLC is not able to accommodate and provide, you will be asked to bring food for your child and a note from your child's physician. To maintain consistency, TLC approves these requests on an extremely limited basis.

Meal replacements should match the designated weekly menu (i.e., a protein, a grain, a vegetable, and some fruit). Please omit juice, sweets, candies, and chips as we cannot serve these as a meal substitute. Lunchboxes and meal substitutes will be stored in your child's cubby. We are unable to refrigerate or store substitutes in our kitchen or cabinets, so please provide these daily in a lunchbox containing a thermos for hot meals and an icepack for cold meals.

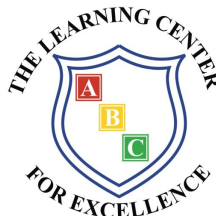
### **Formula/Breastmilk**

If your infant drinks breastmilk and/or an alternative formula, bottles must be PRE-MADE daily and dated. Please provide only what your baby will need each day, all unused formula/breastmilk will be returned at pickup.

For more information regarding children with special dietary needs, please speak to a TLC Administrator.

### **DIAPERS AND PULL-UPS**

It is better to have too many than not enough, we suggest 4-6 per day and encourage you to bring diapers or pull-ups in bulk at the beginning of each week. We will store these in your child classroom. Our team will notify you when supply is getting low.



## OUTSIDE PLAY POLICY

We firmly believe in the importance of outside play. Children must have outside playtime daily, weather permitting. Our classroom schedules reflect the times when each classroom will be outside. Children will not be outside for longer than 1-hour period. You will need to dress your child appropriately for outside play, jackets, hats, etc. Children will not play outside in inclement weather, such as rain, thunder, during heat advisories or other health alerts or if it is below 50 degrees. To provide adequate supervision for all children, we are not able to keep some children inside while the rest go out. If your child is too ill to go outside, he or she is probably too ill to be at the center. Exceptions will be made only for children who have a note from the child's physician stating that the child has a medical condition that prevents him or her from going outside.

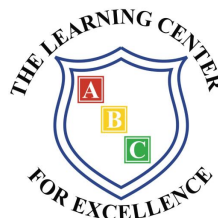
## CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

We are an interactive hands-on preschool. Your child will have access to water play, paint, play dough and much more each day. Our team will make every effort to balance your child's need to explore and learn and getting messy while engaged in learning activities. It is recommended that children come to school ready to play with the anticipation that they will probably get messy. Most messy play will not stain, but it can happen. TLC will not reimburse or replace stained clothes, so please keep your keepsake or favorite outfits at home. Please ensure that you provide one complete change of clothes (shorts/pants, shirt, socks, and underwear) to be stored in your child's cubby.

**Seasonally Appropriate Attire** Please dress your child appropriately for the season.

**Footwear** All children who are walking must wear closed toe shoes with backs. **Sandals and flip-flops** are strictly prohibited due to safety. Children arriving with improper footwear will be sent home. The only exceptions is during Spirit Week or other special event, alternate footwear may be permitted.

**Jewelry** Also, because we are a messy and active play preschool, you are encouraged to leave jewelry, such as earrings, bracelets, necklaces, etc. at home. TLC is not responsible for lost or missing jewelry.





**Fingernails** It is also helpful to keep your child's nails trimmed. Often, due to lack of language skills, young children will hit or scratch other children in an attempt to communicate their dislike. Children with long nails can leave scratch marks or otherwise injure another child. Keeping your child's nails trimmed will help avoid unintended injury.

## **PARENT EXPECTATIONS**

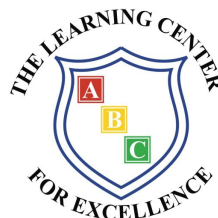
### **PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Learning Center had adapted the following policies and standards of conduct to ensure positive relationships as well as to ensure mutual respect between parents and team members are always maintained.

TLC Preschool requires that parents of enrolled children behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect at all times. One of our most important goals is to provide the most appropriate and secure environment for children that encourages growth, learning and development. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of employees and board members at TLC but it is also the responsibility of each parent or adult who enters the school. We are a close family-like community here at TLC. We understand that team members and parents may be friends outside of the classroom setting. It is important for any personal conflicts or disagreements to be kept outside of the preschool.

The preschool shall be always a calm and positive place for children. Any concerns a parent may have regarding a member of team members will be listened to outside of the classroom and where needed acted upon. However, it is both the parents and the team member's responsibility to ensure that personal disagreements and general dislikes of each other must be kept outside of the classroom setting.

**Swearing/Cursing:** No parent or adult shall be permitted to curse or use any other inappropriate language when working in the classroom or playground. Such language will NOT be tolerated in the presence of children or team members.



**Inappropriate Attire:** Parents and team members are expected to dress appropriately when working in the classroom. Revealing clothing and beachwear should be avoided.

**Threats and Confrontation:** Threats of any kind toward team, members, other parents, or children will not be tolerated. While it is understood that all parents may not always agree with the TLC team members or the parents of other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner.

Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited. Shouting, raising voices or any unwanted physical contact with a member of team is considered inappropriate behavior. Parents must be always responsible for and in control of their own behavior.

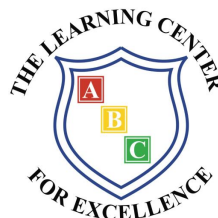
With these policies in place, we hope to provide your child and family with a comfortable and safe environment as we help set the stage for a life full of learning ahead.

### **SIGN IN AND OUT DAILY**

The Department of Children & Families requires that parents/guardians sign their children in and out each day. This also helps us keep track of the number of children who are at school. Parents use the Brightwheel Parent kiosk. Upon registration, our Administrative Team will assign a Brightwheel log-in. If you have any trouble using the Brightwheel system, please see the Administrator In-Charge so that they can assist you.

### **PICK-UP AND DROP OFF**

Parents, guardians, or other authorized persons (18 years of age or older) are responsible for ensuring that their student is safely escorted to and secured within your vehicle. For your convenience, TLC provides “runners” in the morning between 7:00am-9:00am and in the afternoon between 4:00pm-5:45pm to escort our students to and from our lobby and their classroom.



Children must be signed in and out with time and date by a responsible, unimpaired, authorized adult. Families must notify the center if someone other than the parent or guardian is picking up the child. Authorized non-custodial individuals must present a state issued photo ID when picking up children. You may request to add or delete authorized persons from your emergency contact list at any time via e-mail from the parent's e-mail address on file or over the phone with your family emergency pin. Never leave children unattended in vehicles. If you require assistance at pick up or drop off, please call the center, and team member will assist you.

### **Parking**

Due to limited parking space, please use the designated parking spots when picking up or dropping off. Do not park along curbs and only those with current handicap parking permits may park in the handicap spots.

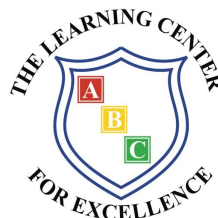
### **Inclement Weather**

When picking up or dropping off during inclement weather or when you have a sleeping infant in the car, our team is happy to assist you by bringing your child to your car. Simply call the center and a team member will promptly bring your child to you.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The staff is trained to re-direct children, use logical consequences, and teach self-control. When a child continues to be unable to control their actions, one method we use is called "safe place." When children are upset, angry, or being disruptive, they may be sent to or asked if they would like to go to the "safe place." This is a quiet spot in which they can allow themselves to take the time to relax, breathe, and try to get their emotions under control. Teachers will continue to watch children while they are in the "Safe Place" to make sure they are not hurting themselves or others. They will encourage the child to talk about their feelings and help with calming techniques so the child will be able to return to the classroom setting.

If a child's challenging behavior persist after the teacher have used redirection, logical consequence, and self-control techniques the teacher will notify administration. As a team, the



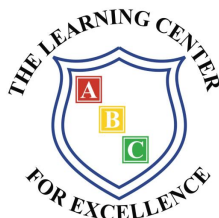
administrator and teacher will develop a plan to assist the child. If a child's extreme disruptive behavior continues after the teacher implements the behavior plan, the Director will meet with the child's parent. The director and the parent will establish a positive intervention to change the unwanted behavior by handled in an age-appropriate manner, keeping the nature and frequency of the incidents in perspective.

The Learning Center for Excellence clearly prohibits the following as a means of controlling a problem behavior by withholding food or drink, toileting, physical punishment, belittling or ridicule and any other form of emotional abuse, napping and humiliation. Children may not be denied active play because of misbehavior.

### GUIDELINES FOR DISENROLLMENT DUE TO BEHAVIOR

Every effort will be made to work fairly and consistently with each child and their individual needs. Children identified as having special behavioral needs will have a written behavior management plan developed and approved by the child's teacher, Director, and parents. In extreme cases, where excessive, inappropriate behavior, or extreme behavioral outbursts by a child puts their safety, another child's safety, or a team member at risk other alternative strategies, including resources and referrals to help in finding more appropriate and/or medically necessary care will be provided to parents.

Children, especially toddlers, due to limited communication and social/emotional skills, will sometimes hit or bite other children or teachers, throw toys, cry/scream, etc. These are all part of typical development. TLC has proven strategies in working with toddlers going through this developmental stage. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. Our biting policy which can be found in your enrollment application has been developed with both ideas in mind. We understand that biting, unfortunately, is a part of a day care setting. TLC will work with parents when biting becomes a problem. We will make every effort to solve the issue as soon as possible. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting. If the issue cannot be resolved, TLC reserves the right to discontinue childcare for any child whose behavior is detrimental to the general well-being of other children receiving care at TLC.



If a biting incident occurs, Florida Department of Children and Families regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

We encourage parents to become involved with the program. TLC honors the important role of parents. Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the childcare center. Parents may volunteer to read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted in their classrooms any volunteer opportunities available. Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items, do maintenance work, or assist in the front office.

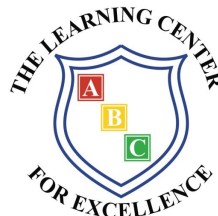
A monthly newsletter is distributed to provide information concerning center curriculum, policies, announcements, and general information about young children. We also try to will keep you of community events. Please read these newsletters so you can remain informed about center policies and procedures. Teachers will share information with you about your child's day daily through the Brightwheel app as a daily note for infants, and daily communication boards for our preschoolers.

## PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are a great opportunity to:

- discuss your child's progress
- share your child's strengths and needs
- work with the teacher to help your child do well in school
- prepare for transitions into their next classroom or to kindergarten

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, usually in October and April. They're brief meetings, lasting about 20-30 minutes. Sign-up sheets will be posted in the front lobby



about a week in advance. We can make accommodations for sibling conferences to be scheduled back-to-back. Additionally, if necessary, separated parents can schedule separate conferences. Other team members or therapists who support your child's learning may attend the conference too. Conferences focus on your child development and creating individualized goals for your child. The teacher will review your child's progress, including strengths and areas of concern. We encourage you to come with questions and are happy to provide additional resources, information and community referrals. Directly following your scheduled conference, please complete the Parent Satisfaction Survey, located on our website.

## PARENT SURVEY

We love hearing from our parents! There is an annual parent survey available for you to complete and return. The survey helps open the line of communication with parents and our team. Parent survey provides awareness to teachers in regard to meeting the academic, social, emotional and cognitive needs of each student. In addition, the survey gives us feedback to know future program improvements, student behavior accommodations, staff changes, and facility upgrades. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

At the Learning Center, we love celebrating birthdays, holidays, and special occasions. Birthday celebrations will take place during afternoon snack time, typically 3-3.30pm. Families are welcome (limit 2 guests) and encouraged to host the celebration in your child's class room, please do have lots of fun decorating with table cloths, party plates, cups, napkins, birthday banners, balloons etc. We also encourage you to plan a party game/activity. Our team will be thrilled to assist you with these. Please communicate with your kiddo's teacher at least one week prior to the day if you would like to celebrate at TLC. This communication allows our instructors to make any needed modifications to lesson plans and sometimes children have the same birthday, so this communication also helps us plan accordingly.

In addition to all the fun and games we also want to ensure we are teaching life-long healthy eating habits. All food items must be store bought with the label of ingredients clearly visible.



We will only serve child sized portions and mindful of food allergies. As always food must be nut free.

**Birthday treat food ideas/options:**

**Suggestions:** Water, Sparkling Water (unsweetened), fat-free or 1% milk, or 100% fruit juice

100% Fruit Popsicles, Mini – cupcakes, Fresh Fruit, Frozen Yogurt, Rice Cakes, Veggies & low-fat dip

**Goodie Bag Suggestions:**

Markers/Crayons, Books, Chalk, Bubbles, Coloring Books, Puzzles, Kazoos, Stickers  
Goodie Bags will be placed in cubbies and sent home with kiddos at the end of the day.

**Art Activity:** Bring in all the necessary supplies and be sure to cut any paper or patterns beforehand.

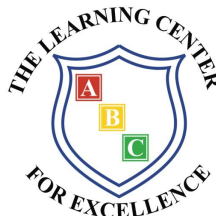
**Scavenger Hunt:** If your birthday party theme is "The Hungry Caterpillar" you could place different pictures of fruit around the classroom that the kids have to "hunt" for.

**Donate:** Consider visiting our Amazon wish lists for ideas and donating a new set of puzzles or books in honor of your child's birthday.

For Birthday Parties Outside of School Hours- Only if all children are invited the invitations can be given to the teachers to hand out at an appropriate time. If all children are not going to be invited to a party, the parent must use an alternate way to distribute the invitations. We thank you in advance for your participation, and cooperation.

School-Wide Events

TLC schedules several parent engagement activities throughout the year such as Open House, Fall Festival, Graduation Program, Winter Wonderland and more. You will also receive Brightwheel reminders for each event. We also advertise all our events in your child's classroom and in the front lobby bulletin board. This is a great time to meet other parents and network with our teachers in a less formal setting.





## VOLUNTEERS

TLC offers many volunteer, internship, and practicum opportunities for individuals as well as community groups and students. Your time is a valuable resource, and we welcome the opportunity to share your talents with our children and families.

### **Parent volunteers**

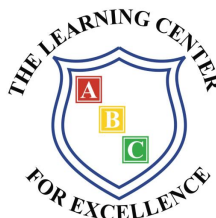
Parents are encouraged to volunteer throughout the center – classrooms, kitchen, resource room, etc. Volunteer opportunities range from special events and festivals to daily classroom helpers. Please look for sign-up sheets next to the Brightwheel Kiosk where you sign in and out to sign up for volunteer opportunities. All volunteers must be registered through the Brightwheel system and sign-in and out during each visit. Please see a TLC Administrator or your child's teacher to volunteer.

### **Volunteers from the Community**

First time volunteers must complete a Volunteer Orientation and all required paperwork with the Program Director before they are permitted to volunteer during operational hours. Any individual who volunteers more than once must have a background check completed before being permitted to perform any additional volunteer work.

Volunteers must complete a back-ground screen and provide state issued identification. All volunteers must complete an orientation training and register their time through our Brightwheel check in system. The volunteer must always wear a volunteer ID badge during their visit and return upon departure. Any volunteer who exhibits inappropriate behavior or violates our Confidentiality or Disciplinary Policies, will be prohibited from continuing the volunteer work with TLC.

## **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT POLICY**





All parents and guardians should be aware that Florida Statutes require all childcare personnel to receive training on child abuse and neglect. The law also requires childcare personnel to immediately report suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the appropriate authorities. If you suspect the abuse or neglect of a child, please call the Department of Children and Families Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96ABUSE (22873).

## **BACK TO SLEEP POLICY**

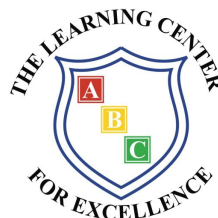
Since the Back to Sleep campaign was initiated in 1994, infant deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) have decreased by 40 percent. It is our policy that all infants, even those who can roll over, will be placed to sleep on their backs. The only way that an exception to this policy will be made is with written documentation from the child's physician indicating that the child must be placed on his or her stomach to sleep due to a medical necessity.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

We have an emergency preparedness plan for natural disasters. Each month, TLC practices fire drills with the children and TLC team members at various times of the day, including naptime. Each year, TLC practices for other types of emergencies, such as tornado/severe weather, lock down and missing child. For medical emergencies, the Administrator In-Charge will call 911 immediately. A team member trained in First Aid and CPR will begin emergency intervention, if necessary. Other team members will ensure the safety of all other children, away from medical emergencies. The Director and child's parents will be notified. The child's folder will be made available to medical personnel. The Director or Administrator In-Charge will accompany the child to the hospital and wait there until the parents arrive.

## **INCIDENT/ACCIDENT**

In the case of an injury or incident that does not require emergency care, the teacher will complete a TLC Incident/Accident Report. This report will be given to the parent at pick up to review and sign. Copies of completed forms are available upon request. This form will also be used to document unusual injuries noticed upon arrival.



## **EXCLUSION POLICY FOR ILL CHILDREN**

A child who is displaying possible signs of illness must be picked up from the center as soon as possible (within 1 hour maximum). When children are sick, every effort will be made to exclude them from direct contact or activity with other children. Parents will be called immediately. If parents cannot be reached, a team member will call emergency contacts. Young children may exhibit indications of illnesses that are associated with erupting teeth and the staff will help you determine this, since this is clearly not contagious. We have an isolation area for your child in the event he or she becomes ill while at school.

We understand that your child may have lower attendance during cold and flu season. If all parents or guardians adhere to the policy, we will be able to control the spread of typical childhood illnesses. We encourage children to practice washing their hands thoroughly, and all toys are sanitized daily by the staff. Should the center experience any unusual level or type of communicable disease, after notifying the proper authorities, we will inform you verbally or in writing if your child may have been exposed with information including signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that have been implemented at the center and/or measures that should be implemented at home.

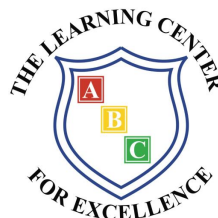
Please note that absences, regardless of the cause, will not entitle the parent to a refund or discount on the regular rate. If you have any future questions after reading the policy, please contact the director.

### **Possible Signs of Illness Include:**

fever of 100.4 degrees or high, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy or who have suspected untreated infectious conditions such as ringworm, pink eye, lice, impetigo, etc.

## **RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER AN ILLNESS**

Children who are sent home due to a suspected illness must be symptom free for at least 24 hours (without the aid of fever reducing medication). Children, whose illness requires



medication, must have taken the medication or at least 24 hours prior to returning to school. Children sent home with suspected infectious conditions, must have a doctor's note indicating the child may return to care. There is NO EXCEPTION to this policy. TLC will not put other children or our team at risk of becoming ill. Because young children have an under-developed immune system, parents should have a sick childcare plan or alternative person if the parent is unavailable or unable to take time away from work.

### **NAP/ REST TIME**

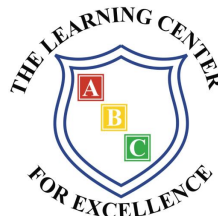
We make every effort possible to provide a quiet and soothing environment for nap and rest time. Parents are responsible for providing the necessary linens such as blankets and a fitted sheet which will be sent home once a week to be laundered. If you wish, you may bring one small pillow or stuffed animal. Children ages 1 years – 5 years of age is required to rest on a mat from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Teachers assist children in resting with reading stories and providing soothing music. Children are not required to sleep but are expected to rest quietly on their cots during nap time.

### **TUITION FEES & PAYMENTS**

Monthly tuition rates are based on the annual cost of tuition per child, providing families with a consistent tuition rate throughout the year. Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and considered late on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Students are unable to attend school with delinquent accounts on the 4<sup>th</sup> of the month. If no tuition has been received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month enrollment will be terminated.

Tuition and fees can be made by check, money order, debit, or credit cards. Cash is not accepted. Money orders and checks can be mailed to 5012 West Tennessee Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32304. Debit and credit cards can be made through the parent app Brightwheel, ACH payments will be charged .60 convenience fee.

There are no discounts are given for months with fewer days, holidays, or in-service days. Tuition is not prorated due to vacation, holidays, or illness.



## **LATE PICK UP FEES**

Please allow enough time at the end of the day to arrive at the Center, pick up your child(ren) by 5:45pm, or 11am if you are VPK only. When parents are late to pick up their children it causes hardships for our team members; unable to leave at the end of their scheduled shift. Many teachers have classes, families, and personal commitments for which they are responsible.

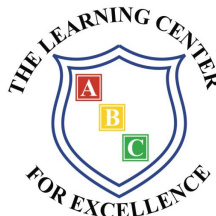
A late pickup fee will be charged to your account for each child picked up late at the rate of \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes and \$1 per minute thereafter.

If you are going to be late, please contact our administrative team. Our team will make every effort to locate parents or emergency contacts, but if someone cannot be located, The Learning Center Team will contact the Tallahassee Police or Leon County Sheriff's Department. Our team will give the responding law enforcement officers enrollment and emergency contact information and the child will be placed in the care and supervision of law enforcement.

Picking up children late from care should be considered an exceptional occurrence. Excessive late pick-ups are grounds for termination of childcare services.

## **GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTARY DISENROLLMENT**

As much as it saddens us our families eventually leave due to various circumstances. Whether it be the great transition to kindergarten, or a family moves out of the area, A 30-day written notice is required to withdrawal. Parents wishing to withdrawal their kiddo, but who fail to provide a 30-day written notice, will be responsible for tuition for the remaining 30 days or any portion thereof. In addition, families leaving with a remaining balance or insufficient notice will lose retuning student priority status on our waitlist. Upon disenrollment TLC's admin team will request that you complete a parent exit survey to gather more information about your families



experience with us. These surveys help us in making programmatic decisions aiding the continuous growth for generations to come.

**TUITION ASSISTANCE**

The Learning Center is a provider for The Early Learning Coalition of The Big Bend. For details regarding direct tuition assistance please see a member of our administrative team.

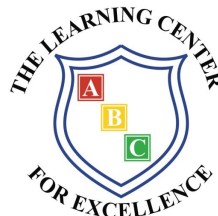
**Fee Schedule**

<b><u>CLASSROOM</u></b>	<b><u>MONTHLY</u></b>	<b><u>PART-TIME</u></b>
<b>One Year Old</b>	<b>\$850</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Twos Year Old</b>	<b>\$825</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Three Year Old</b>	<b>\$800</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Four Year Old</b>	<b>\$775</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Five Year Old</b>	<b>\$775</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>VPK (7AM – 5:45 PM)</b>	<b>\$525</b>	<b>\$300 (7:00am-2:00pm)</b>

**TUITION/ FEES/ LATE PAYMENT FEES**

Our program charges a one-time registration fee of \$125 and \$25 per additional child. Tuition and parent fees are due on or before the first day of each month. We depend on prompt payment of tuition to pay our team salaries and meet our operating expenses. A \$35 late payment fee will be charged for any tuition that is paid after the 3rd of the month. If tuition has not been paid by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month, services will be suspended. If no tuition has been received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month enrollment will be terminated.

Tuition and fees can be made by check, money order, debit, or credit cards. Cash is not accepted. Money orders and checks can be mailed to 5012 West Tennessee Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32304. Debit and credit cards can be made through the parent app Brightwheel, ACH payments will be charged .60 convenience fee.



There are no discounts are given for months with fewer days, holidays, or in-service days. Tuition is not prorated due to vacation, holidays, or illness.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

At The Learning Center confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of who have a “need to know” to care for your child most appropriately and safely. Confidential and sensitive information about facility, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as TLC strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy.

Any information regarding a child, a child’s family, or other matters discussed with center management or staff will be held in the strictest confidence. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health related information of anyone associated with TLC.

Outside of TLC, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of TLC, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information. Any persons who violate the Confidentiality policy will be terminated from TLC. You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e., biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Employees of TLC are strictly prohibited from sharing behavioral issues with unauthorized persons.

## **CHILDREN’S RECORDS**

Confidentiality and Distribution of Records: The information in your child’s record is considered privileged and confidential. Your child’s information and records are kept in strict confidence. Only those persons directly related to the care of your child, center management, or



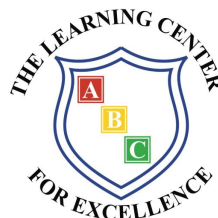
regulatory agencies will have access to the record unless your written permission is given. As a parent/guardian, you may have access to your child's records within a reasonable time upon your request. Upon withdrawal of your child from the center, files will be retained for four years. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to add information, comments, data, or other relevant material to your child's record. You also have the right to request, in writing, deletion or amendment of any information contained in the record. When your child leaves the center, center management will provide a copy of your child's record to you within a reasonable time of your written request.

### **CUSTODY ORDERS**

Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking-up a child in our care. The center must be notified immediately of any changes in custody orders. Certified custody orders must be given to the center director. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, TLC suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued. If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed. Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, TLC is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of TLC, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. TLC will report any violations of these orders to the court.

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY AT TLC**

Given the diversity of the families and communities we serve, it is necessary for us to recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child brings to our programs. TLC provides care for children between the ages of 12 months to 5 years of age without regard to race, religion, color, creed, gender, cultural heritage, parent/guardian marital status, parent/guardian political beliefs, parent/guardian sexual orientation, mental disability or special needs, child's toileting ability, medical condition, HIV status, veteran status or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws.



The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to people with disabilities. The law covers children with disabilities seeking reasonable accommodations in a childcare setting, as well as the parents/guardians served. TLC will conduct an individualized assessment of the needs of a child and family and engage in an interactive dialogue with parents/guardians, caregivers, and medical professionals to identify reasonable accommodations and to safely integrate the child into the program, given each individual's capabilities, and to give the family full access to and participation in our programs to the extent feasible.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR ELC (SCHOOL READINESS VOUCHERS)**

### **ABSENCE REPORTING**

The Learning Center must report absences in accordance with the Rilya Wilson Act. If a Protective Services child: is absent for one (1) day with no contact from the parent or caregiver by the end of the day, or – has seven(7) consecutive excused absences, regardless of communication with parent/caregiver, provider must notify by the end of the next business day BOTH the Early Learning Coalition (ELC).

The Learning Center will report to ELC when any SR child is absent for 5 consecutive days with no contact from parent by close of business on the 5th day. If the need for care cannot be reestablished by ELC, Provider and parent(s) will be notified that the School Readiness funding will be discontinued. The Learning Center will report all absences via the ELC's website, [www.elcbigbend.org](http://www.elcbigbend.org).





## **ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN (VPK)**

VPK hours are 8:00am -11:00pm daily, Monday- Friday. You will receive a Holiday and closure schedule, including all instructional and non-instructional VPK days, upon enrollment.

### **TARDINESS**

All VPK instruction begins promptly at 8:00am. ALL students must arrive by 9am to attend school for the day. Students with doctors' appointments may arrive by 10am with doctor's note.

### **ABSENCES**

If a VPK child accumulates too many absences, 20% or more of the total VPK hours, which is equivalent to 36 VPK days, The Learning Pavilion will not be reimbursed by the state. Therefore, The Learning Center has the right to dismiss a child from the VPK Program after 25 VPK absences, excused or unexcused. Please call the school when you know your child will be absent. Upon return, provide written documentation of absence. Documentation should be given to the administrative team.

### **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

#### **SENIOR DIRECTOR**

**Elgenette Williams**

**[1408.excellence@gmail.com](mailto:1408.excellence@gmail.com)**

#### **PROGRAM ASSISTANT**

**Kameron Grissom**

**[1408.excellence@gmail.com](mailto:1408.excellence@gmail.com)**

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

**We welcome suggestions on how to make our services better. All parents are encouraged to complete a Satisfaction Survey on a regular basis. These surveys are reviewed by TLC Administration and suggestions and improvements are implemented as appropriate.**



## Receipt of Handbook

Parent(s) and Guardian(s) must sign and date this form stating that they have received a copy of this Handbook, Know Your Child Facility Brochure, Influenza Virus Brochure, Permission for Food Related Activities Form, and you have read and agree to the center's rules and regulations. This handbook will be issued to the enrolled child's parent/guardian and the signed copies of center policies will be held with The Learning Center. Proof of acceptance will be placed the child(ren) file.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian                      Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature                      Date

### Chil(d)ren's Name

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

