



700 W. Pioneer Dr. Irving, TX 75061 Phone: 972-253-4810

Parent Handbook

Welcome to The Learning Tree Academy!

Dear Parent:

Thank you for your interest in The Learning Tree Academy for your family's early care and education provider. We understand the challenges involved in selecting an educational setting for your child and we are here to help make this a smooth transition.

Quality

The Learning Tree Academy has a history serving the Irving community as a quality not for profit provider of early care and education and work hard daily to maintain and improve our early care and education service. We have served families in this community and although much has changed around us over the needs of working families remain constant. We provide a loving, nurturing, and safe environment and believe that children learn best when their individual needs are met. The center implements a **creative curriculum** beginning in our work with infants, which guides teachers to look at children as individuals and supports our belief that children learn through doing.

Relationships

We believe that when a family chooses The Learning Tree Academy it is the beginning of a journey through your child's early years of life! We hope that our program is an extension of your home and can provide support and information through your child's tenure here. We formally meet with parents twice a year to assess development and answer any questions and **our staff** is always available to answer any questions about the day-to-day issues.

Thank you again for your interest and I encourage you to be in touch with any questions.

Sincerely,
Tye Hammock
Director
thelearningtreeacademytx@yahoo.com

Parent Handbook

Our Mission

The goal at The Learning Tree Academy is to provide children a safe, fun, and loving environment in which to learn. Every child is unique, and we value each and every one of them. We provide activities that encourage social, cognitive, language, physical, and creative development in the children. Good manners as well as being polite, considerate, and helpful are behaviors that are modeled by our teachers.

Our Philosophy

We, at The Learning Tree Academy, believe that our program and services offer developmentally appropriate curriculum, and we strive to enhance social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth in young children. Our program fosters curiosity, creativity, and self-esteem by considering children's abilities and interests. Child initiated and teacher supported play is an essential component of our program.

Our Goals are to provide a stable, loving, and educational environment to promote healthy developmental skills and support children's desire to learn. Also, we aim to work in harmony with families to make each child's early years the best they can be.

Accreditation

The Learning Tree Academy is currently in the process of receiving 2 accreditation certifications: National Accreditation Certification and the Texas Rising Star Accreditation Certification. Both certifications will show that The Learning Tree Academy demonstrates and document quality performance using research-based criteria and evidence-based practices. The National Accreditation Commission provides a comprehensive, ongoing quality improvement system that recognizes the inherent diversity among programs through the self-study and award process. Each staff member of TLTA will be required to have at least 30 training hours per anniversary year to stay abreast of all industry changes and updates. Staff members will also be provided with the resources to achieve at the minimum a Child Development Associate Degree (CDA). Bachelor's Degree and higher are encouraged but not required at a teacher level.

Fees Schedule (subject to change)

<u>Age</u>	<u>Weekly Tuition Fee</u>
6weeks – 11months	\$175/weekly
12 months – 23 months	\$170/weekly
24 months – 35 months	\$165/weekly
3yr old	\$160/weekly
4 & 5 yr. old	\$150/weekly
Before and After School Care	Service currently suspended due to COVID-19 until further notice
Summer Program	(tentative)

Tuition Payments

Tuition is due on the Monday of each week in advance (or 1st day of attendance). A charge of \$30 will be charged for a return check. If a second check is returned, all future payments will have to be paid by certified funds (cash, debit/credit card, or money order. **Tuition is not based on attendance. We are reserving a space for your child and tuition must be paid whether your child is in attendance or not.** All financial arrangements or questions concerning an account are to be made with the Director. Checks should be made payable to The Learning Tree academy and will be processed by the Director/Assistant Director.

Late Fees

If tuition is not paid by Monday end of business day, there will be a \$50.00 fee assessed Tuesday and due at time tuition is paid.

Days of Operation

Monday thru Friday; 6am – 6:30pm; Year-round; closed on Saturday and Sundays.

Due to COVID-19 19 pandemic precautions, tentative operational hours will be 7am – 5:30pm, Monday – Friday.

Enrollment

To enroll or re-enroll your child, you must complete an Enrollment Application and return it to the center. An application to enroll in the food program must also be completed. Only a paid enrollment fee (\$75) secures a spot on the student roster. Please read this policy thoroughly

so, you will have a clear understanding of our policies and procedures. If there are any policy changes while your child is enrolled, the changes will be submitted in writing and posted either on the front entrance door, front desk counter, or written notice sent home with each parent.

Re-enrollment fee of \$75 is charged when a child is dropped from the program by the parent or Center and re-enrolled at any given time. If a client wishes to continue services, and if the slot is still available, the \$75.00 re-enrollment will be requested upon entering the program.

Discontinuing Enrollment of your Child

To discontinue the enrollment of your child, we ask that you provide us with as much notice as possible. There is a two-week notice required in writing for intent to discontinue enrollment. Please include the reason for discontinuing enrollment. The Learning Tree Academy reserves the right to discontinue enrollment of any child who presents a risk to the health or safety of other children or staff, or any child whose needs cannot be met by our program. Two weeks of tuition charges will be billed to the account for the failure to give notice. In the event the tuition account is referred to an outside collection agency, an additional service fee will be charged. No yearly tax statements will be given to parents until there is a zero balance on the tuition account. We currently accept cash (exact amount; no cash kept on premises), checks, money orders, and credit/debit cards.

Enrollment Fee Refunds

Enrollment deposits required to reserve a place for your child will not be refunded upon dis-enrollment.

Attendance

Licensing regulations limit any child's attendance at a childcare facility to no more than ten (10) hours per day.

Holidays

The Learning Tree Academy is closed in observance of New Year's Day, Easter, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the Friday after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The closing of these holidays will fluctuate depending on which day of the week they fall. If the holiday is on a weekend, the Academy will be closed either the Friday before the holiday or the Monday after the holiday. All dates the Academy will be closed will be posted on the front entrance door. **THERE IS NO REDUCTION IN TUITION FOR THESE HOLIDAYS....NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Reporting of Absences

If your child is going to be absent or on holiday or vacation, please notify the Director. If your child is ill, you should notify the center to the nature of the illness, particularly if it is contagious. If they have seen a doctor, or if you have been instructed by the staff, please provide a doctor's note stating it is ok for the child to return to childcare. If your child is enrolled in the afterschool program, please notify the center if they are absent from school that day. We ask that you notify us at least 2 hours in advance of the scheduled pick-up time for your child if they do not need to be picked up from school. This will help prevent miscommunication regarding your child's transportation.

Before and After School Care

The Learning Tree provides before and after school care for children ages 5 through 12 years of age. This program includes transportation in a licensed, insured vehicle equipped with all mandatory safety features. A safety seat is required for children under the age of 8. Before and after school care transportation is provided to children in the Irving ISD. Please see management for a list of schools we service transportation. Your weekly tuition does not cover care when your child's school is not in session. Additional fees are required to be paid if your child is in attendance when the center is open, and school is out for holidays and/or school closings. If your child has been suspended from their school, they are not permitted to attend The Learning Tree anytime during their suspension.

Supplies

Each child must have an emergency change of clothing (which includes underwear, pants, shirt, & socks) which remains at the center. All clothing should be marked with the child's name. The center does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged clothing. Children should wear inexpensive clothing because they will be involved in indoor/outdoor play, painting, etc.

Parents must supply disposable diapers and wet wipes for all children in diapers. The Learning Tree staff may bring to a parent's attention when they feel a child is ready for potty training; or the parent may discuss this with staff when they feel their child is ready. The Learning Tree is ready to cooperate with parents to accomplish this goal. Parents are asked to supply disposable pull-ups and wet wipes during this time.

Children must wear closed-toe shoes always.

Breastfeeding Policy

Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, can use the infant room during this time. This area will have an electrical outlet, comfortable rocking chair, and nearby access to running water. Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the center refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers for breast milk, clearly labeled

with name and date. Artificial baby milks (formula) and solid foods must have original labels and/or be in its original container for the staff to administer. Formula will not be

provided unless the mother has requested. Babies will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy

At The Learning Tree Academy, your child's health is our primary concern. All our teachers are required to have SIDS training annually. Our staff are trained to place infants on their backs. Infants who fall asleep, in any position, in any restrictive equipment (boppy, highchair, etc.) they will immediately be gently placed in a crib on their back for the duration of their nap. If your infant arrives to the center asleep in their car seat, he/she will immediately be removed and placed in their assigned crib on their back. Also, all infants who can roll over, their crib has been labeled with a "I can roll over" sign so all staff is aware and informed. In keeping with licensing standards, no soft items are allowed in the crib such as stuffed animals and blankets. Only a snug fitted crib sheet and the infant will be placed in the crib.

Personal Belongings

We ask that you not allow your child to bring personal belongings from home such as electronics, toys, books, stuffed animals, etc. The Learning Tree is not responsible for these lost items.

Sign In/Sign Out and Release Procedures

Parents of full-time and drop-in children MUST sign in and out of the center upon arrival and departure each day using the clipboard located at the center's front desk. Each parent will be assigned a code to access the front door at the time of enrollment. This code is for security purposes only. Parents are asked not to share codes with unauthorized users. Visitors may ring the doorbell at the front door and TLTA staff will give access to the building (if the visitor does not pose a threat to staff or children). TLTA staff will not receive students before 6:00a.m. nor will we receive children after 9:00a.m unless prior arrangements have been made with management, such as a doctor's appointment or a family emergency. The center closes at 6:30 p.m. If someone other than the child's custodial parents or guardian will be picking up the child from the center, prior authorization in writing must be given. The parent or guardian should provide the names, home numbers, and addresses of at least 2 other adults (18 years of age and older) that have permission to pick up the child in case of an emergency. This authorization is given on the enrollment form and should be periodically updated in writing. The Learning Tree will ask for proper identification before releasing a child to someone other than his/her custodial parent or guardian. A photo ID is required.

The Learning Tree cannot prohibit a parent who is listed on the enrollment application from picking up a child. If you provide The Learning Tree with a copy of a legal notice to have on file, staff will refuse to release the child. If the parent demands the child's release, staff will try to dissuade the parent and contact you. If the parent physically takes the child who is not authorized to pick up the child, The Learning Tree staff will not be held legally liable to physically withhold the child but will contact you and authorities immediately. This applies only

for legal guardianship and only if a legal notice is in the child's file.

Safe Arrival and Departure Policy

To prevent unnecessary accidents, parents are asked to take their child directly to their class upon entering the building or to the designated class for students arriving before 9:00 a.m. Students leaving the building must be accompanied by parents or adults from the class to the vehicle. DO NOT ALLOW your child the freedom to run or roam the building, classrooms, parking lot, or hallway. TLTA will not be held liable for accidents, incidents, or injuries that may occur to children who are not under the care of TLTA staff. When children are released from the class to parents/guardians, they are no longer under the care of TLTA staff.

Late Child Pick-Up

A late fee of \$5.00 per minute per child will be charged for pick-up after closing time. Late fee must be paid before child can return to TLTA. When a parent/guardian is 30 minutes late and the center staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any emergency contacts, TLTA staff is required by law to contact the police department. If the police are unable to reach an authorized, responsible adult, they will contact the Dept. of Family and Children Services and place the child with CPS. It is very important to pick children up on time or in the event of an emergency to contact the center. Make sure all home, work, and emergency phone numbers are current.

If, at any time, your address or any phone numbers change, **please inform the administration and your child's teachers immediately.** It is extremely important for both teachers and the office to have your current information to be able to reach you at all times.

It is the responsibility of the parent to report to the office any change of address, telephone numbers (home or work), employment, emergency contact person and medical information.

Sick/Illness Policy

TLTA makes every effort to ensure that the center is safe and healthy environment for every child. In the best interest of all the children, please follow the health guidelines:

1. We ask that you keep your child at home when he/she is sick. In general, a child should not return to the center until they have been fever-free or diarrhea-free for at least 24 hours.
2. If a child becomes ill at the center - that is shows symptoms of a fever (100 degrees or over), vomiting, diarrhea (after 2 episodes) or any other suspected contagious illness, the parents will be contacted and must make arrangements for the child to be picked up immediately.
3. If a child is sent home with a suspected communicable disease, you must provide a written notice from your child's doctor stating that they are not contagious and may

return to childcare.

Center health policies may differ from your child's pediatrician's opinion. In all situations, TLTA's policy will override your child's doctor's recommendation.

Communicable Diseases

Parents will be notified by a sign on the front door if a communicable disease is introduced into the center. The center will notify the Health Dept. of any communicable disease in the center.

Medication Administration

Due to COVID 19 Precautions, no medications will be administered until further notice.

This policy protects children, parents, and staff. The Learning Tree will **only** administer medication prescribed by a doctor.

- We will not administer the initial dosage of a medication, except with physician's written permission for life-threatening situations.
- A Medication Authorization form must be completed and signed by the parent that provides written instructions for use, that includes, the medication name, dosage, time, and date medicine is to be given.
- Written instructions from the parent are to be as prescribed by the physician.
- The Medication Authorization form will be filled out by a parent for each prescription required
- Parents must inform staff of any side effects or reaction that medication may cause in a child. (i.e., hives, drowsiness, diarrhea)
- All medicine must be non-expired, in the original container and clearly show the following:
 - ✓ Child's full name
 - ✓ Name of medication
 - ✓ Dosage
 - ✓ Route (oral, nasal, rectal, eye, ear, or injection)
 - ✓ Physician's name
 - ✓ Care of medication (shake well, refrigerate)
 - ✓ Date to end administration of medication
- All medication will be stored in a locked cabinet or refrigerator inaccessible to children.
- Each dose given will be documented on the Medication Authorization Form with medication name, the amount, time given, and the name of the staff person who administered the medication.
- Only staff who have been trained in Medication Administration are authorized to give

medicine to children.

- Do not leave any type of medication (prescribed or over the counter) in diaper bags or cubby areas.
- Topical ointments such as diaper ointment, insect repellent, or sunscreen must also be labeled with your child's full name.
- Any baby bottles containing medicine will not be given to the child at the daycare.
- If the child comes in with a baby bottle containing medicine, it will be locked up and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

Medications administered by devices

- For chronic conditions, such as asthma and allergies, the parent/legal guardian's written consent must be renewed monthly.
- An individual care plan must be provided, that lists:
 - ✓ Symptoms or conditions under which the medication will be given
 - ✓ Use and care of device
 - ✓ Parent and trained staff signatures documenting parent instruction on use and care of device. (Renewed annually or as needs change)

Health Records/Medical Requirements

Parents are responsible to keep their child's health records current to reflect any significant changes as they occur, i.e., telephone numbers, work location (s), emergency contacts, child's physician, child's health status, infant feeding plans and immunization records.

Medical Requirements – Immunizations

We adhere to state regulations regarding immunization records for your child. Immunization records must be provided upon enrollment. Infant, toddler, and preschooler immunization records must be current. The original copy of the state required certificate, which shows month and date of next immunization, is the only immunization record we may accept. Validated proof of immunizations should be submitted as your child receives new immunization or booster shots. Current Texas Department of Health Requirements can be found by accessing this link: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/#childcare>.

Vision and Hearing Requirements

The vision and hearing screening program, Chapter 36 of the Health and Safety Code requires that all children enrolled for the first time in any public, private, parochial, or denominational school or in a Department of Family and Protective Services licensed childcare center and childcare home in Texas must be screened or have a professional examination for possible

vision and hearing problems. The requirements for vision and hearing screening apply each year for children enrolled in any licensed childcare center. A qualified registered nurse will be called to the center for parents who want their children to undergo the screening process. TLTA will supply a vendor that will give these screenings if needed by the parents 1x per year. Parents are responsible for at least 1 screening per year. Cost will be given to the parents at least

48 hours prior. Who must be screened? Any child who is 4 years old by September 1st and Kindergarteners within 120 days of admission. For more information, please contact the Vision, Hearing, and Spinal Screening website at <http://dshs.state.tx.us/vhs/require.shtm>

Exceptions

A child is exempt from screening if screening conflicts with the tenants and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the child /parent is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the child's parent/guardian must submit to the center on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections of the screening.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Medical Emergencies

If your child is injured at the center, CPR or 1st Aide will be administered. If treatment by a doctor is needed, we will make sure every effort to contact you and/or the doctor you have chosen to treat your child. In the event of an emergency, we will make sure that your child receives the necessary emergency treatment until we can reach you. The authorization for emergency treatment on the enrollment record must be signed when you enroll your child. Any student accident beyond our scope of basic care will be considered a medical emergency and The Learning Tree Academy will call 911. Parents will be notified, and all incidents will be documented, and a copy provided to the parent. A severely injured or ill child will be taken by ambulance to a local hospital and parents and emergency contacts will be notified.

Evacuation Situations

In the event of an evacuation emergency, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building. Plans are posted and available for parent viewing in every classroom in the center. In case of emergency evacuation, we will evacuate and assemble at the following location: De Zavala Middle School, 707 W. Pioneer Dr., Irving, TX 75061, Tel# (972) 600-6000. If De Zavala Middle School is not available for any reason, we will assemble at South Irving Library, 601 Shulze Dr., Irving, TX 75060, Tel# (972) 721-2606. Parents will be called as soon as safely possible following an emergency evacuation.

Severe Weather/Loss of Power or Water

The Learning Tree Academy makes every effort to be open. Please remember if the weather is bad that if it prevents you from getting to work, or delays you, the same applies to our staff as well. When in doubt please call to verify or watch the news for schools unable to open.

If severe weather, such as a tornado, occurs while children are in care at TLTA (if the early warning siren sounds), children will be escorted into the hallways away from the entrance and exits and placed against the walls until the warning siren stops.

If civil defense or other government officials announce local public closings due to inclement weather or other emergencies, children must be picked up within the hour of media announcement. Children remaining after one hour will be transported to the nearest Civil Defense emergency shelter. In the event of loss of power and/or water at the center is to exceed four (4) hours, parents will be contacted to pick up children immediately.

Emergency Notification Card

Emergency contact information is kept on file for every child at the center. In case of illness or injury, the information is used to notify and advise you of the person(s) designated by you of the child's status. It is extremely important that the information be kept current with correct phone numbers. If any of the following information should change at any time, please notify management so that we can better serve you and your child:

- * Phone numbers where you can be reached during the day
- Addresses at home and work
- Names, phone numbers and addresses of authorized persons to contact in case of an illness or injury
- Names of all persons authorized to pick up your child

Moonlighting

The Learning Tree Academy is not responsible for outside babysitting outside our premises.

Food Program

The Learning Tree Academy participates in the Federal Children and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which provides extra funds to ensure healthy, nutritious meals approved by the United States Department of Agriculture. This program is a tremendous asset to the children. Parents must complete an Income Eligibility Statement as a part of the enrollment application process and every year in October after that. TLTA provides breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack under this program.

Nutrition Policy

In addition to the CACFP policies Texas Rising Star Program Practices include the following:

- Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach.
- All staff are educated on food allergies and they take precautions to ensure children are protected.
- On days that providers serve meals, prepared food that is brought into the program to be shared among children is commercially prepared OR prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by the local health officials.
- That healthy snacks (as listed by the Texas Department of Agriculture) are available for school-age children as children arrive.
- On days that providers serve meals, milk, fresh fruit, and vegetables are available for children who bring lunches from home.

Diet exceptions/ Home Lunch Practice

Children may not bring food into the center. Breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack is served at the center. Monthly menus are posted in the reception area and classrooms for the parents to review. Food exceptions are not made for individual children except in cases of allergies or a special diet prescribed by a physician. For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide notification, in the form of a doctor's note, of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

We understand the importance of family unity; however, each person who is employed at TLTA is considered a mandatory child abuse reporter. This means that if we have reason to suspect abuse or mistreatment or are told by a child that they have been abused in any way, we are required by law to call and report this to DHS. We, as a staff, have training in what steps/measures should be taken in such a situation. The staff has also been trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse as well.

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g., car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically

require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.

- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

Parents should understand that filing a report is considered a request for an assessment of the concern. A report does not establish fact, but rather is the beginning of a helping process for children and families. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the center director or the local Department of Human Resources.

Substitute Teachers

On the days when staff ratio is low or a staff member is ill or absent, the director will call for a teacher substitute, assistant, or aide to assist in the daily activities.

Health Requirements / Licensing Regulations

Employees must be free of any health problems that could interfere with the performance of assigned job duties or endanger the health, safety, or wellbeing of the children. All employees must be able to supervise children visually and audibly. All employees must be able to lift children, bend from the waist, stoop, kneel, and squat and have a healthy back. All employees must be able to get up and down from the floor with or without reasonable accommodations. New employees are required to provide a Tuberculin (Tb) test showing freedom from tuberculosis (Tb) at the time of initial employment by a licensed physician or clinic.

Additional tests and/or examinations may be required from time to time at the discretion of the director. The cost of pre-employment exams will be borne by the employee. In the event of a positive tuberculosis test, the employee is required to present proof of follow-up action as recommended by a licensed physician or health professional. Employees are also required by Child Care licensing to have CPR, First Aid, TB, Fingerprinting, and a Child-care worker card. The employee is responsible for these fees.

School Pictures/Snapshots

For your child's safety, we are required to take a picture of your child. As well candid shots will be taken throughout the year in the classrooms of the children. Professional school pictures are taken twice a year in the fall and spring. The price for pictures **IS NOT** included in tuition.

CURRICULUM

Our educational program focuses on each child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development by offering concrete, hands-on activities for the child to explore. Our skilled teachers prepare curriculum that is exciting and challenging, as well as supportive of each child's own learning style.

Developmental Progress

Directors and staff are trained to monitor the cognitive and physical development of each child. Each child will be promoted to the next class when the staff and parents agree that the child is developmentally ready (provided space is available). The Director will discuss any development concerns that may arise and work with the parents for a resolution. The Staff and Management of TLTA are willing to help all children and parents during this time.

Special Needs

The Learning Tree Academy is dedicated to providing quality, early childhood education to children in our care. We strive to provide an individualized learning environment for each child. We do this through information gathered within the registration packet. The Parent must provide in writing from a doctor the child's diagnosis and any special instructions that the TLTA staff may need to better care for your child. The doctor's documentation is required to enroll your child or by no later than the end of the 1st week of care provided by TLTA. The Parent Handbook specifies our policy concerning this matter and the parent must sign stating you will adhere to this policy. You will be required to inform our staff about your child's special needs through private consultation, meetings, and written detailed instructions. We will work together to provide an environment that is positive for all children in our care. If TLTA management feels the arrangement of care is not working out for either parties, we reserve the right to discontinue care for any reason.

Inclusion Services

The Child Care Group provides an Inclusion specialist to help families who may need these services. For additional information, please contact: Childcare Group, Inclusion Services Department, 1420 West Mockingbird Lane, Suite 300, Dallas, Texas 75247, Phone: 214-630-5949.

Lesson Plan Extension/Field Trips

Field trips will be taken periodically to nearby places and are considered an important part of the educational program. The same responsible adult supervision will be provided for those excursions as are available to the children while in attendance at the Center. The children attending these field trips will wear name badges or TLTA t-shirts with the center's name, address, and contact numbers at all times. Parents must provide a car seat for all children under

the age of 8 according to safety regulations when transported to a field trip. Parents will be notified in advance of all field trips away from the Center. A notice posting on the front door will give details of the trip such as place, address, and times away from the center. The entire class staff is needed on the trip to ensure proper supervision and safety of the class during the trip. Students are strongly encouraged to wear sneakers on all field trips. Toys, electronic devices, games, and other such items should not be taken on trips, unless special permission is given by staff. TLTA will not be held liable for any lost, damaged, or stolen items on field trips.

COLLEGIATE MONDAYS

This year we are promoting college readiness having your child wear a t-shirt from their favorite college on Mondays. Please join our staff by wearing your college gear!

Nap time

Every effort is made to adjust to the individual needs of all children regarding the daily nap. For children at The Learning Tree attending full days, a peaceful rest period is essential. The Learning Tree shall provide each child under school age an opportunity to rest. After at least 30 minutes of quiet rest, those children still awake can play with quiet activities under the supervision of the teachers. Parents may provide the child with a special book or stuffed animal for naptime. Provisions will be made each day for each child to rest. Children under 12 months of age are permitted to sleep on demand. Children under the age of 12 months are provided with cribs/playpens especially designed for comfort and safety. A minimum of 2 hours per day and maximum of 2 ½ hours rest time will be available for each child. Please provide a small blanket to cover cots at naptime. The linen should be picked up every Friday afternoon to be laundered and brought back to the Center on Monday mornings. Please label your child's linen and all personal items with his/her name or initials. Cots/Mats are provided for children under school age unless requested by TLTA Management for parents to purchase. For School aged children who choose to rest when they are here during school holidays, mats are made available for them.

Water Activities

The Learning Tree Academy will not participate in any water activities at the center. If your child participates in the Summer Camp (ages 5-12), water activities will be provided away from the center. ONLY students with written permission/permission slip signed by parent/guardian will participate.

Screen Time

If TV/video, computer, or video games are used as an activity for children, we will ensure that they: (1) Are related to the planned activities (2) Are age-appropriate; and (3) Do not exceed two hours per day.

To help accommodate families with the remote learning environment mandated by the school systems (due to COVID-19), we now offer Virtual Learning Assistance to K-5th grade students. Screen time is contingent based on each student's virtual schedules and requirements.

Animals

The Learning Tree Academy is subject to having the following small animals in our possession: fish, hamster, gerbil, etc. We ensure proper hygiene and safety for our children, staff, and animals at all times.

Prayer/Pledge of Allegiance

Every morning we begin our day with prayer and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. We also say a prayer before every meal is served.

Nurturing

We nurture our children by praises, rewards, and hugs! **“HUGS ARE CONTAGIOUS.”**

Cleanliness

TLTA is designed to be easily cleaned and maintained to high standards of sanitation. The facility is cleaned daily by our staff. Air filters are changed monthly. Preventative pest control is conducted monthly. Our staff cleans and disinfects changing tables after each diaper change. All toys and equipment are disinfected on a regular basis. We promote cleanliness and good hygiene with the children. Frequent hand washing is practiced by the staff and children. Hand washing is always required before eating and after toileting.

Termination of Services

The Learning Tree reserves the right to terminate childcare services if:

- ☐ Tuition is not paid in a timely manner.
- ☐ Policies and procedures are not followed.
- ☐ Parent is not supportive in addressing behavioral problems, i.e., biting, inappropriate language, hitting, or disobedience while riding on a school vehicle. If any of these offenses happen twice on the same day, parent will be asked to immediately pick up their child and schedule a conference with the director and the teacher. If inappropriate behavior continues after the conference, childcare services will be terminated.
- ☐ Immunization is not kept current.
- ☐ If parent is abusive or disruptive to The Learning Tree Academy staff member or program in any manner.
- ☐ If the director is not properly notified that a child will be absent from the center.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

We encourage positive redirection. Positive discipline teaches children where limits are set, how to maintain control of their bodies, and how-to problem solve in the event of the conflict.

We encourage children to empathize with one another's feelings and see the results of their actions. We discourage inappropriate behavior. No child is subjected to corporal punishment or physical discipline at any time. Discipline shall never be related to food, rest, or toileting.

We will make every effort to work with parents of children having difficulties in childcare. Behavior of children which disrupts normal classroom group activities on a frequent or extended basis may indicate physical or emotional problems requiring the attention of a professional specialist. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior which is upsetting to the physical or emotional well-being of another child may require the following actions:

1. Parents of the child will be called in for a conference. We will discuss the issues and identify some possible solutions. A plan of action will be developed and agreed upon by the parents, staff, and a health/behavioral specialist.
2. If the plan of action is not working, the parents will be called in for another meeting. We will discuss what is not working and develop another action plan.
3. If no progress has been made towards solving the problematic behavior, the child may be suspended from care. This suspension may range in length from the rest of the day to indefinitely.

Parent Partnership

Parental influence is a crucial component to the success of a child's educational achievement. Parents are their child's most important teacher. Children are more successful learners when their parents are actively involved in their learning, both at home and at school. To support parents as partners, we encourage families to be involved in their child's educational process. The Learning Tree Academy operates under the "open door" philosophy. This means parents are welcome to visit the center at any time during operational hours without an appointment, fostering a sense of openness and inclusion.

Evaluation of the Center

Parents/guardians will be asked annually to participate in an evaluation of the staff and curriculum. This usually takes no longer than 15 minutes and is extremely helpful to administrators as they strive to ensure the absolute best environment and program for the children.

Parents are encouraged to contact the Director with their comments, concerns, or questions to the policies and procedures. An acknowledgement of receipt of the policies and procedures will be required from each household. Parents will obtain a copy of any changes made to the policies and procedures of daily operations of the center as soon as approved. Parents will also be required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt.

Parents can review the Minimum Standards and most recent licensing inspection report required by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services at any time. Parents can contact DFPS located at 8700 N. Stemmons Freeway, Suite #104, Dallas, TX 75247 for further information about childcare at (214)583-4253 or may view the website at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Family Participation/Volunteers

We encourage our parents to participate in the child's learning experience. All volunteers that will provide direct care or have direct access to children are subject to background check.

Some possible opportunities to participate and contribute to your child's learning experience:

- Field trip supervision
- Leading or assisting special projects (painting, cooking, etc.)
- Construction or collection of raw materials for art projects, dramatic play props, etc.
- Eating lunch or snack with your child – please inform the teachers one day in advance
- Volunteering in your child's classroom

Parent Conferences

Our top priority is to maintain a good relationship with our parents. Parent conferences are conducted by the child's teacher, and/or Director (Assistant Director) twice a year. Conferences are scheduled on a regular basis available upon the request by the parent, teacher, or Director (Assistant Director).

Parent Code of Conduct

The Learning Tree Academy always requires the parents of enrolled children, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of TLTA is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of TLTA but, is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter.

SWEARING/CURSING:

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

THREATENING OF EMPLOYEES, CHILDREN OTHER PARENTS OR ADUTLS ASSOCIATED WITH TLTA:

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society TLTA cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the agency will not assume the risk of a second chance. PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.

PHYSICAL/VERBAL PUNISHMENT OF YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN AT TLTA

While TLTA does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the childcare facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcomed to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Center Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our agency have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

SMOKING:

For the health of all TLTA employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on agency property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of [CENTER NAME]. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

VIOLATIONS OF THE SAFETY POLICY:

Parents are required to always follow all safety procedures. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children, and associates of TLTA. Please be particularly mindful of TLTA entrance procedures. We all like to be polite. However, we need to be careful to not allow unauthorized individuals into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you may, in fact, be polite, however that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Center Director.

CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH EMPLOYEES, OTHER PARENTS OR ASSOCIATES OF TLTA

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of TLTA or the parents of the 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.

VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

TLTA takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the agency. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with TLTA. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information, which is not necessary for them to know, will be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of The Learning Tree Academy to provide an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination of any type, including discrimination based on color, race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, and source of payment, Vietnam era, Veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law. This policy governs all aspects of the TLTA operations.

Complaint Procedure

If you have a question or concern, do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the teacher most directly involved. If the concern is not resolved, the director can be reached at 972-253-4810 or by e-mail at thelearningtreeacademytx@yahoo.com. The director is available to assist parents and staff in resolving concerns.

Gang-Free Zone

A gang-free zone is designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang-related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include childcare centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your childcare center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone. Please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

A childcare center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

For additional information, please contact your local licensing office at 214-583-4253.

SMOKING IS NOT ALLOWED ANYWHERE OR BY ANYONE ON THE CENTER'S PREMISES.

These guidelines will be strictly enforced.



I have received, read, and fully understand the above policies of the Parent Handbook.

Child's Name _____

Parent's/Guardian's Printed Name (s): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____



The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. While the risk of serious illness or loss of life is greatest in those 65 years and older, persons in every age group can get COVID-19 and some will have a severe illness, especially if they have serious underlying medical conditions, such as heart disease or compromised immune systems.

We should all be thankful that, with rare exceptions, COVID-19 is not claiming the lives of our children. However, we can never forget that a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread that infection to others who may be far more vulnerable.

COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, speaking and even just breathing. COVID-19 can also be spread by touching objects where contaminated droplets have landed. Because of this easy manner of transmission, an infant, child, or young person who is infected with COVID-19 can spread the infection to others they come in close contact with, such as members of their household, teachers, or other caregivers. We have learned that infected persons with mild or even no symptoms can spread COVID-19.

These facts are vitally important when considering the reopening of schools, daycares, youth camps and other places that provide care and education for our children.

One thing is for certain: education and childcare are essential, and we must find reasonably safe ways to restore these services so that our children can be cared for, educated and their parents and guardians can return to work. We must find ways to protect our children from COVID-19 to ensure that they do not bring the infection to others, such as other household members, who may be at high risk for severe infection or even loss of life.

For adults in the workplace or other public spaces, we are confident that if certain measures such as cloth face coverings or non-medical grade masks, respiratory etiquette, frequent hand washing / hand sanitation and environmental cleaning and sanitizing are widely observed, we can then proceed with reopening Texas in a safe and measured way.

However, some of the protective measures that we can expect from adults, such as wearing cloth face coverings and maintaining distance from one another are, for a variety of reasons, simply not possible for infants, children, and youth to practice in schools, daycares, and youth camps. In some cases, the child will be too young to understand and practice these precautions. We cannot, for example, expect a group of toddlers or schoolchildren not to engage in interactive play or share toys.

All these factors mean that while certain precautions against the spread of COVID-19 can and will be applied to schools, daycares and youth camps, the infection control measures that can be put in

place in these settings will differ somewhat from those that are suitable for other social, business, and commercial settings.

Therefore, every childcare provider who is responsible for providing care or education for infants, children and youth in these settings must be aware of these facts and be willing to comply with the infection control measures that will be in place in these settings. Parents or guardians should monitor the health of their child and not send them to the program if they are displaying any symptom of COVID. Parents or guardians should seek COVID testing promptly and report results to the program given the implications for other children, families, and staff. Individuals aged 65 or older are at a higher risk of COVID-19. Parents or guardians should protect any vulnerable persons who are members of the same household or come into frequent, close contact with infants, children and youth who attend daycare.

CHILD CARE FAMILIES: Page 2 of 3

About minimum health protocols:

All individuals age 10 or older must wear a face covering (over the nose and mouth) wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another individual not in the same household.

The following are the minimum recommended health protocols for all childcare centers choosing to operate in Texas. Childcare centers may adopt additional protocols consistent with their specific needs and circumstances to help protect the health and safety of all employees and children.

The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas. The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities. We should continue to observe practices that protect everyone, including those who are most vulnerable.

Please note, public health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. Childcare centers should stay informed and take additional actions based on common sense and wise judgment that will protect health and support economic revitalization. Childcare centers should also be mindful of federal and state employment and disability laws, workplace safety standards, and accessibility standards to address the needs of both workers and customers. Federal and state regulations regarding childcare centers should be followed.

Health protocols for families whose children attend childcare:

Those 65 and older are at high risk of serious injury or death from COVID-19. 75% of deaths in Texas are from those in the over-65 population. Therefore, children in daycare should minimize in-person contact with any person 65 years of age or older, especially those with pre-existing health conditions. This includes maintaining social distancing of at least 6 feet separation from those individuals, wearing a face covering or mask, and avoiding sharing utensils or other common objects with those individuals.

- Follow the drop-off procedures proscribed by your childcare provider.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, other measures such as hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced.
- Screen yourself and your child before going into a childcare center for any of the following new

or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache

- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

Revised 7/3/2020



Texas Department of State Health Services

John Hellerstedt, M.D.
Commissioner

CHILD CARE FAMILIES: Page 3 of 3

- Wash or disinfect hands upon entering the childcare center and after any interaction with employees, other customers, or items in the center.
- Wash or sanitize hands after dropping off your child.
- Think carefully about how you prepare your child's lunch or drinks for the day. Consider disinfecting reusable items every evening and before leaving for the day.
- Pack extra changes of clothes for your child, as childcare centers are being asked to change children's clothing more regularly to prevent disease spread.

- Avoid sending in toys that cannot be cleaned daily into the childcare center. If you do allow your child to bring in a toy from home, these toys should be cleaned every day when the child comes home and every morning before the child leaves.
- Avoid sending items from your home for activities such as show and tells.
- Parents should be aware of the risk to individuals 65 years of age or older from a child who could show no signs of the virus.