



# **The Learning Tree Child Care Center Parent Handbook**

Welcome to The Learning Tree!

We are so excited you have chosen to become part of our Learning Tree family.

Here at The Learning Tree we want your children to grow into individuals who love learning! Each day our team of dedicated teachers brings their creativity, skills and passion into the classroom to instill lifelong lessons. We feel strongly about going beyond the ABC's and 123's. Your children will spend their days learning about art, science, math, literacy, phonics, how to take care of their earth, community and neighborhoods, nutrition, music and much more! You will receive daily updates about your child's day, including the activities they were engaged in, as well as observations related to their development.

In addition to the daily communication you will receive from your child's teachers and our Administrative team, we have created this Parent Handbook to provide you with the guidelines, policies and procedures of our center. These policies have been created with your child's best interest in mind to provide them with the best possible care.

This handbook has been developed in accordance with Michigan's Licensing and Regulatory Affairs standards, Michigan's Great Start to Readiness, National Early Childhood Program Accreditation standards (NAEYC and NECPA) and guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

At times it may be necessary to change, revise or amend one of our policies and procedures contained in our handbook. If this occurs we will provide you with reasonable notice of any modification that may impact your family or your child. You will be notified of any changes in writing ten days prior to the change.

We welcome any questions that you may have regarding the information found in our Parent Handbook and encourage you to speak to your center Director or our Regional Director at any time.

Thank you again for becoming part of the Learning Tree family. We are thrilled to be a part of your family and are eager to watch your little one grow with us!

# INTRODUCTION

The Learning Tree is a privately owned and operated child care facility dedicated to providing the highest quality programming and care for. The first Learning Tree opened its doors in 1982 and since then has continued to strive to reflect the highest of standards.

We accept children ages 6 weeks through 13 years of age, on a full-time, part-time or weekly basis.

## PHILOSOPHY

Here at The Learning Tree we believe each child is a unique individual and our programs and curriculum are designed to support the developmental needs of each child in an age appropriate and supportive environment. We are committed to supporting a child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development, respecting a child's individuality, and helping children learn to live and play cooperatively. We strive to promote children's health, self-awareness, self-worth and resiliency.

## OUR MISSION AND CORE VALUES

You have enrolled at a child care center that is a leader in providing the very best early childhood education practices for children. Since 1982, The Learning Tree has made the difference in the lives of thousands of children and families. Our mission is to ensure that all children enrolled at our centers have daily experiences which result in positive outcomes. To some, this might seem like a daunting task; but here at The Learning Tree, we accomplish these everyday by adhering to our core values:

1. Growing Lifelong Learners
2. Teaching a Green Lifestyle
3. Putting Families First
4. Creating a Safe Environment
5. Investing on Our Teacher's Future
6. Serving a Fresh Organic Menu

These values make us who we are today and are what set us apart from other child care centers.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Learning Tree subscribes to a policy of non-discrimination of any type, including discrimination based on race, color, age, religion, sex, national origin, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, genetic information, political beliefs or any other characteristic protected by law.

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

In acting with compliance with the American with Disabilities Act and other federal laws pertaining to the provisions of services with children with disabilities; our goal is to meet the individual needs of the child within the structure of our program, while maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all children and teachers.

# **EDUCATION & CURRICULUM**

## **CURRICULUM**

The Learning Tree is committed to providing your child with the highest quality early childhood education and care in an enriching environment. Our program is designed to encourage each child to reach their full potential and develop a love for learning through numerous activities and experiences throughout the day.

The Learning Tree believes that children and adults learn best through hands-on experiences with people, real materials, events and ideas. This is the basis of the Highscope curriculum implemented at The Learning Tree. Each day, children are experiencing a program that has complete teaching practices, defined content areas and assessment tools for each age group. The Highscope Curriculum encompasses the classroom environment and learning materials, the daily routine and the way teachers engage in the children's learning. Children and teachers follow a consistent daily routine that encourages open ended activities and interactions independently and as a group. The Highscope Curriculum offers children the opportunity for hands-on learning each and every day and the teachers have the freedom to plan lesson plans based on the children's interest and choices.

## **ACCREDITATION**

We are strong advocates of accreditation programs sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Early Childhood Accreditation (NECPA).

At The Learning Tree you will find many of the policies and practices used by our center exceed Michigan State Child Care licensing standards as they are based directly on the more stringent standards and criteria established by these accrediting institutions.

## **HOME & CLASSROOM TRANSITIONS**

A positive transition from home to our center is a collaborative effort between you and our teachers. As each child reacts differently to separating from their parents, it is important to meet the teachers in your child's classroom and let them know if your child has a difficult time separating and what our teachers can do to ease the situation for you and them.

Here at the Learning Tree we schedule a pre-visit for you and your child. We like to schedule the pre-visit one or two weeks prior to your child's first day. Pre-visits are usually done from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. The goal of the pre-visit is to acquaint children and parents with our center and the classroom environment. You will also want to use this time to talk to the teachers about how they can best meet your child's needs. If you would like to have more than one pre-visit, we are more than happy to accommodate you – we want you and your child to feel comfortable and secure in our center.

When the time comes for your child to transition up to another classroom we will contact you to discuss the move. The move will always be a collaborative decision between you and our teachers. Prior to the transition day we encourage you to schedule a pre-visit as there may be specific policies and procedures in the new age group and classroom.

## DAILY SCHEDULES AND ROUTINES

INFANT	HighScope KDI Focus
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Arrival</b></p> <p>Children are greeted warmly by teachers. Teachers help children separate from parents, often times with a daily morning ritual for infants to depend on. Friendly goodbyes and warm wishes for return allow infants to feel more comfortable from day to day. Teachers acknowledge the child's feelings about separation and engage children with a toy or some special one on one time like reading a book or sitting with them. Arrival time is a great time to exchange information with the parent about infant's previous evening and morning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Social &amp; Emotional</li> <li>* Approaches to Learning</li> <li>* Language, Literacy &amp; Communication</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Choice Time</b></p> <p>Choice time allows infants to explore and investigate with peers and teachers. Teachers allow opportunities for children to explore safely and freely and make choices in play based on development and ability. Choice time is an uninterrupted period of play and exploration. Teachers communicate give and take with infants and help problem solve if needed. Children's lead and ideas are be followed by teachers and actions tailored according to children's interest. During choice time children are able to participate in planned lesson plan activities based around weekly theme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Social &amp; Emotional</li> <li>* Physical Development &amp; Health</li> <li>* Language, Literacy &amp; Communication</li> <li>* Cognitive Development</li> <li>* Creative Arts</li> <li>* Approaches to Learning</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Outside Time</b></p> <p>Infants are exposed to outside time twice daily (weather permitting). Infants are provided with a variety of experiences from walks, to playing in the grass to bubbles to exploring nature. These experiences allow infants to explore it their senses. Teachers bring classroom items outside for children to play with as well. In the sunlight, infants soak up Vitamin D and absorb calcium for strong bones and teeth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Social &amp; Emotional</li> <li>* Physical Development &amp; Health</li> <li>* Language, Literacy &amp; Communication</li> <li>* Cognitive Development</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Group Time</b></p> <p>During Group Time teachers plan ahead and provide active group experiences~ introduce new materials and actions, revisit favorite materials and actions and provide movement and music experiences. Children's choices are respected and encouraged. Teachers sit with the children and talk to the children about what they are doing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Approaches to Learning</li> <li>* Language, Literacy &amp; Communication</li> <li>* Cognitive Development</li> <li>* Creative Arts</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Departure</b></p> <p>At departure time, teacher's pleasant and friendly good-byes for return allow children to reunite with parents. Even at a young age, this develops the bond of trust between both parents and teachers. Departures are a smooth transition and should be smooth to allow infants to transition from school to home. Departure time is and important time for teachers to fill parents in on their child's day and parents have the unique opportunity to see their little one interact with other infants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Social &amp; Emotional</li> <li>* Approaches to Learning</li> <li>* Language, Literacy &amp; Communication</li> </ul>
<b>The following routines are based on children's needs and schedules and are done throughout the day.</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Feeding and Mealtime</b></p> <p>Feeding and mealtimes are based on each infant's individual needs. Teachers hold and pay close attention to bottle feeding infants, talking with them or singing to them. Older infants are supported in feeding themselves. Mealtime goes beyond the basic need of food and allows personal contact from an attentive teacher.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Approaches to Learning</li> <li>* Social &amp; Emotional</li> <li>* Language, Literacy &amp; Communication</li> <li>* Physical Development &amp; Health</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bodily Care Routines</b></p> <p>Bodily care is scheduled around the child's play and exploration. Teacher's focus on the child at hand during the care routine .Infants are told what is happening as it occurs. Infants are talked to and engaged in conversation. Teacher's respond to infant's coos and babbles. Infants are given choices about parts of the routine even if they cannot respond. Older infants are encouraged to do things for themselves (hold their diaper, wash their hands etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Approaches to Learning</li> <li>* Social &amp; Emotional</li> <li>* Language, Literacy &amp; Communication</li> <li>* Physical Development &amp; Health</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Naptimes</b></p> <p>Naptimes are scheduled around each child's individual needs. Infants are rocked and comforted to sleep. Classroom environment and teachers allow for infants to wake on their own in their own way. Quite alternatives for nonsleepers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Physical Development &amp; Health</li> </ul>
<b>Daily schedule is flexible based on each child's individual needs.</b>	

	<b>TODDLER</b>	<b>HighScope KDI Focus</b>
6:30-8:30	<b>Morning Routines/ Learning Centers/ Outside</b> Children are free to explore a limited number of Learning Centers selected by the teacher as they arrive and get settled in for the day. Classrooms may open up outside if weather is permitting.	
8:30-9:00	<b>Breakfast</b> Good nutrition is fundamental for creating strong learners. Teachers serve fresh and homemade foods, including organic fruits and vegetables. Meals are served family style so children can interact with each other and with their teachers while sharing a healthy meal.	* Social & Emotional * Physical Dev & Health * Language, Literacy & Communication
15-30 minutes	<b>Diaper Changing and Toileting Times</b> Teachers interact individually with children and converse with them about what is happening. Open ended questions are asked and children are encouraged to help with the process (retrieve own diaper, get own paper towel after washing hands etc)	* Social & Emotional * Physical Dev & Health * Language, Literacy & Communication
15 minutes	<b>Large Group Time</b> Children participate in songs, fingerplays and music that involve movement and props. New materials and introduced while teacher talks about plan for the day as part of Message Board. ZooPhonics friends are discussed.	* Approaches to Learning * Language, Literacy & Communication * Cognitive Development * Creative Arts
60 minutes	<b>Small Group Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers and children carry out a teacher planned activity.</li> <li>Teachers have a back up plan to add to activity if necessary.</li> <li>Children plan of where they want to spend their Work Time &amp; what they would like accomplish that day.</li> <li>Teachers interact with children, observing &amp; documenting their interests and scaffolding their learning through conversation and questioning techniques.</li> </ul>	* Approaches to Learning * Social & Emotional * Physical Development * Language, Literacy & Communication * Cognitive Development * Creative Art
15 minutes	<b>Work Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children carry out their plans in each of the Learning Centers that teachers enhance based on children's interests, weekly theme and planned lesson plan activities.</li> <li>Teachers interact with children, observing &amp; documenting their interests and scaffolding their learning through conversation and questioning techniques.</li> <li>Snack is made available at 10am</li> <li>Free play choices are available. All centers are open.</li> </ul>	* Approaches to Learning * Social & Emotional * Physical Development * Language, Literacy & Communication * Cognitive Development * Creative Art
10 minutes	<b>Clean Up Time</b>	* Approaches to Learning
30 minutes	<b>Outdoor Experiences</b> Children need time to exercise their bodies as well as their minds. Teachers provide enhancements to outdoor play time such as balls, hula-hoops, bubbles, binoculars, etc.	* Physical Dev & Health * Social & Emotional Development
15-30 minutes	<b>Diaper Changing and Toileting Times</b> Teachers interact individually with children and converse with them about what is happening. Open ended questions are asked and children are encouraged to help with the process (retrieve own diaper, get own paper towel after washing hands etc)	* Social & Emotional * Physical Dev & Health * Language, Literacy & Communication
5 minutes	<b>Transition to Lunch</b>	* Approaches to Learning
30 minutes	<b>Lunch</b> Teachers serve fresh and homemade foods, including organic fruits and vegetables. Meals are served family style so that children can interact with each other and with their teachers while sharing a healthy meal.	* Social & Emotional * Physical Dev & Health * Language, Literacy & Communication
2-3 hours	<b>Transition &amp; Rest Time</b>	* Physical Dev & Health
15-30 minutes	<b>Diaper Changing and Toileting Times</b> Teachers interact individually with children and converse with them about what is happening. Open ended questions are asked and children are encouraged to help with the process (retrieve own diaper, get own paper towel after washing hands etc)	* Social & Emotional * Physical Dev & Health * Language, Literacy & Communication
20 minutes	<b>Afternoon Snack</b>	* Physical Dev & Health
10 Minutes	<b>Movement &amp; Music / Yoga</b> Teachers and children stretch, sing songs, play musical instruments, dance or recite fingerplays.	* Physical Development * Language, Literacy & Communication * Creative Arts
30 minutes	<b>Outdoor Experiences</b> Children need time to exercise their bodies as well as their minds. Teachers provide enhancements to outdoor play time such as balls, hula-hoops, bubbles, binoculars, etc.	* Physical Dev & Health * Social & Emotional Development
60-90 minutes	<b>Open Learning Centers &amp; Teacher Facilitated Theme Activities</b> Children have the opportunity to play and learn in each of the Learning Centers. Teacher facilitated thematic activities enhance afternoon Learning Center time.	* Approaches to Learning * Cognitive Development * Creative Arts
15-30 minutes	<b>Diaper Changing and Toileting Times</b> Teachers interact individually with children and converse with them about what is happening. Open ended questions are asked and children are encouraged to help with the process (retrieve own diaper, get own paper towel after washing hands etc)	* Social & Emotional * Physical Dev & Health * Language, Literacy & Communication
5:00-6:30	<b>Afternoon Large Group/Learning Center Time / Outside</b> Children and teachers come together to wrap up the day. As the day draws to a close, the children can play and explore in Learning Centers selected by the teacher. Classrooms may close outside. Snack is served at 5:00 p.m.	* Approaches to Learning * Social & Emotional * Language, Literacy & Communication

6:30-8:30	<b>Transitional Preschool, Preschool and Prek Morning Routines/ Learning Centers/ Outside</b> Children are free to explore a limited number of Learning Centers selected by the teacher as they arrive and get settled in for the day. Classrooms may open up outside if weather is permitting.	<b>HighScope KDI Focus</b>
8:30-9:00	<b>Breakfast</b> Good nutrition is fundamental for creating strong learners. Teachers serve fresh and homemade foods, including organic fruits and vegetables. Meals are served family style so children can interact with each other and with their teachers while sharing a healthy meal.	* Social & Emotional * Physical Development & Health * Language, Literacy & Communication
15 minutes	<b>Message Board &amp; Large Group Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and teachers come together for large group routines such as daily message.</li> <li>Teachers engage with children in group songs, dances, and games. Children are involved in decision processes during this time.</li> </ul>	* Approaches to Learning * Language, Literacy & Communication * Mathematics * Social Studies
30 minutes	<b>Outdoor Experiences</b> Children need time to exercise their bodies as well as their minds. Teachers provide enhancements to outdoor play time such as balls, hula-hoops, bubbles, binoculars, etc.	* Physical Development & Health * Social & Emotional Development
15 minutes	<b>Small Group Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers and children carry out a teacher planned activity.</li> <li>Teachers have a back up plan to add to activity if necessary.</li> <li>Children plan of where they want to spend their Work Time &amp; what they would like accomplish that day.</li> </ul>	* Approaches to Learning * Social & Emotional * Physical Development * Language, Literacy & Communication * Mathematics * Creative Arts * Science & Technology * Social Studies
60 minutes	<b>Work Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children carry out their plans in each of the Learning Centers that teachers enhance based on children's interests and weekly theme.</li> <li>Teachers interact with children, observing &amp; documenting their interests and scaffolding their learning through conversation and questioning techniques.</li> <li>This is also a time when teachers encourage writing center.</li> <li>Snack is made available at 10am</li> <li>Free play choices are available. All centers are open.</li> </ul>	* Approaches to Learning * Social & Emotional * Physical Development * Language, Literacy & Communication * Mathematics * Creative Arts * Science & Technology * Social Studies
10 minutes	<b>Clean Up/Transition to Recall Time</b>	* Approaches to Learning
10 minutes	<b>Recall Time</b> Teachers meet with children to review their plans and share their learning experiences.	* Approaches to Learning * Language, Literacy & Communication
5 minutes	<b>Transition to Lunch</b>	* Approaches to Learning
30 minutes	<b>Lunch</b> Teachers serve fresh and homemade foods, including organic fruits and vegetables. Meals are served family style so that children can interact with each other and with their teachers while sharing a healthy meal.	* Social & Emotional * Physical Development & Health * Language, Literacy & Communication
2-3 hours	<b>Transition &amp; Rest Time</b>	* Physical Development & Health
20 minutes	<b>Afternoon Snack</b>	* Physical Development & Health
10 Minutes	<b>Movement &amp; Music / Yoga</b> Teachers and children stretch, sing songs, play musical instruments, dance or recite fingerplays.	* Physical Development * Language, Literacy & Communication
30 minutes	<b>Outdoor Experiences</b> Children need time to exercise their bodies as well as their minds. Teachers provide enhancements to outdoor play time such as balls, hula-hoops, bubbles, binoculars, etc.	* Physical Dev& Health * Social & Emotional Development
60-90 minutes	<b>Open Learning Centers &amp; Teacher Facilitated Theme Activities</b> Children have the opportunity to play and learn in each of the Learning Centers. Teacher facilitated thematic activities enhance afternoon Learning Center time.	* Approaches to Learning * Mathematics * Creative Arts * Science & Technology
5:00-6:30	<b>Afternoon Large Group/Learning Center Time / Outside</b> Children and teachers come together to wrap up the day. As the day draws to a close, the children can play and explore in Learning Centers selected by the teacher. Classrooms may close outside.	* Approaches to Learning * Social & Emotional * Language, Literacy & Communication

## **LESSON PLANS**

Lesson plans are posted weekly on the classroom's Family Board. They will provide you with information on what your child will be doing both inside and outside the classroom on a daily basis. Any changes to daily plans will be noted.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

Our lesson plans are designed to encourage children's learning and development. As lesson plans are implemented each day, teachers take careful note of each child's progress and skills. Teachers then transfer their observations into the child's online portfolio that was created on their very first day at The Learning Tree. Teachers work diligently on the portfolios throughout the year in order to accurately assess each child's development. Portfolios are shared with families during our spring Family Conferences.

## **TEACHERS TRAINING**

Based on the Michigan's Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Standards, Michigan's Great Start to Quality and Accreditation Standards and criteria, we provide yearly innovative and current training to our teachers so that they are equipped with the skills and competencies to provide the highest quality of education to your child. Learning Tree teachers are required to obtain a minimum of 30 hours of training during their first year of employment and a minimum of 24 hours every year thereafter in accordance with Accreditation standards. In addition, all teachers complete yearly CPR, Blood Borne Pathogen, SIDS and Shaken Baby and every 2 years First Aid. Training is completed through various ways including online training, monthly lunch and staff trainings and the most up to date DVD's.

During a teacher's first week of employment, they participate in a hands on training program with our Curriculum Directors. During this week they meet one on one with the both the Director and Curriculum Directors, observe in all our classrooms, complete online training and watch numerous curriculum DVD's. After their orientation week they have a greater understanding of who The Learning Tree is and the role that they have.

# **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION**

## **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Parents are always welcome visitors in our centers. We encourage you to visit at any time. Visit your child in their classroom, on the playground, even for lunch. Parents are always welcome when we have special events, activities and field trips. We encourage your active involvement and input into our center's programs, goals and improvements.

## **DAILY EMAILS**

If your schedule does not provide you the time to visit your child, you can still share in your child's day. Each day, if you wish, an email will be sent to you giving you a brief description of what your child's classroom is doing, what art project they worked on, or what book their teacher read to them before lunch. This is a great way to feel part of your child's day and provide great conversation starters on the car ride home or at the dinner table. Be sure to include your email address when you fill out your child's enrollment packet.

If emails don't work for you, just pick up the phone and give us a call anytime. We will be more than happy to chat with you.

## **NEWSLETTERS**

In an effort to keep our parents well informed about what is happening at our schools, once a month The Learning Tree's newsletter, *The Lantern*, is published. *The Lantern* contains information about current child/parent topics, home activity ideas and information about our curriculum. We also use *The Lantern* to inform parents about upcoming events, new families as well as introducing new teachers.

For your convenience *The Lantern* is available on our website at [www.learningtreechildcare.com](http://www.learningtreechildcare.com).

## **FAMILY CONFERENCES**

The Learning Tree offers Family Conferences every October and May. We will work with you to schedule a time that is convenient for you. If needed, arrangements can be made for a phone conference.

At The Learning Tree we use formal and informal observations to assess developmental areas and adjust our programming to ensure we are providing the activities each individual child needs to progress. During conferences we will review your child's progress, and share their assessments with you. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to talk to our teachers to discuss your child's interest and progress. We also encourage parents to have on-going, informal conversations with our teachers at any time.

## **PARENT SUGGESTIONS & SURVEYS**

Maintaining a quality program requires constant reevaluation and the input from our parents. Our website has an online suggestion box which you can access at any time. Please visit [www.learningtreechildcare.com](http://www.learningtreechildcare.com) and leave us a suggestion. You can also send us your input via email.

Annually, you will receive a Parent Satisfaction Survey asking you to evaluate our program. This is an integral part of the improvement process and helps measure progress toward our programs goals and objectives.

## **FAMILY INFORMATION BOARDS**

Outside each of our classroom is our Family Board. On this board you will find important information about your child's classroom, lesson plans and our menus. Also on our Family Board you will find our Teachers Bio information. We want you to become acquainted with the teachers involved in the care of your child. Information on our bio boards contain each teacher's experience, education, qualifications as well as a personal tidbit or two about the teachers.

## **KID REPORTS**

The Learning Tree has a technology program in our classrooms to enhance daily communication with parents called Kid Reports. Our classrooms have tablets in which our teachers input information each day about the child's meals, naps, bodily care and more! Our favorite part is sending and sharing pictures and videos easily to parents throughout the day. Parents are able to choose their method of communication through text, email or using the Kid Reports app themselves throughout the day.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

You can now find The Learning Tree online. Our Facebook and Instagram pages are an excellent source for information on center updates, parenting tips and engaging interactive media. Facebook is also a wonderful place to share stories of your experience with our center.

## **FAMILY CULTURE**

At The Learning Tree we are committed to respecting each child's individual cultural and diverse needs and well as development and abilities, learning about each child's cultural background and incorporating it into life at the center and teaching the children to respect each other's individuality and embrace it.

The Learning Tree Child Care Center offers an educational experience that is rich in culture and diversity. We believe that each child and their family are unique and we do our best to incorporate every child's individual needs, culture and family life into our classrooms on daily basis. Our classrooms are a home away from home and we want children to feel comfortable while they are with us.

Our classrooms reflect the diversity of the children in our care. We ask families to bring items from home to share with the classroom that reflect their home life. Articles of clothing, special kitchen items, books, music, photographs and family heirlooms adorn our shelves. Parents and family members are encouraged to share traditions and cultural practices with the classroom and come to discuss them with the children- possibly even making a favorite family recipe with the children or showing the children a traditional cultural dance.

Often times English is a second language to many children in our care. For these families we ask you to write down "every day" words for us to learn in your native language. Not only will this help us communicate better with your child but this will allow us to teach the other children some words in your language. This will help your child feel more relaxed in their new environment.

We understand that culture and diversity go beyond ethnicity and the country in which our heritage originated. Diversity incorporates where we live, whom we live with, the jobs we have and our lifestyle. We believe in incorporating this into our classrooms as well. In our dramatic play centers you will find many career costumes that reflect the professions of our families. Books align our shelves that discuss different homes or family units. Our block areas have

pictures of local establishments from around the city. We want to ensure that our classrooms mirror the lifestyles our children lead.

The Learning Tree wants both you and your child to feel 100% comfortable in our care. We are always open to new ideas to create an inclusive environment so please feel free to see your center Director if you have any suggestions.

# **ENROLLMENT & TUITION GUIDELINES**

## **ENROLLING YOUR CHILD**

When you enroll your child, you are expected to complete our Enrollment Packet. These forms give us important information about your child so we can provide the best possible care. It is vitally important for your child's health and safety that these forms are completed accurately. Our Director will review the packet with you to ensure all the needed information is included.

## **CHILD INFORMATION CARDS**

As part of your Enrollment Packet you will find a Child Information Card. The State of Michigan Office of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs require that each child have information cards on file and that these cards are updated yearly. If your personal information or work information should change throughout the year please be sure to update your child's card so that we may have the most accurate contact information.

For the health and safety of your child it is imperative that the cards are accurately completed and submitted to our Director before your child begins school with us. You will be asked to provide telephone numbers where you can be reached immediately. Please notify us as soon as any of these numbers change.

You will also be asked to provide us with the name and telephone numbers of at least three other individuals that you authorize to pick up your child from the center. Please let these individuals know that we cannot release your child to them without valid government issued identification. Please note that the name that you list should 100% match their identification.

## **HEALTH APPRAISALS**

Before your child's first day of attendance we must have on file a completed, current health appraisal, including your child's immunization record. You will find the health appraisal form in your Enrollment Packet.

The state requires that health appraisals be completed annually for children birth through 2 ½ years of age and every two years for children 2 ½ through 5 years of age. We will send our reminders at least one month prior to the expiration date of your child's health appraisal.

Validated proof of immunizations should be submitted as soon as your child receives new immunizations or booster shots.

If you choose to waive certain or all immunizations the Health Department requires that a waiver be completed by the parent/ guardian or doctor (if for medical reasons). This waiver must be kept on file at the center and a copy will also be submitted to the local Health Department. The waiver can be obtained from the office and must be resigned yearly.

## **INFANT FOOD AGREEMENT**

For all children enrolled in the infant program, an Infant Food Agreement must be signed and returned on the infant's first day. With this agreement, you acknowledge that it is your responsibility to provide formula, breast milk or other liquids in a clean, sanitary, ready to feed assembled bottle that has been sterilized or is disposable. In addition, sufficient formula, milk and food will be provided by you to meet the minimum needs of your child.

## **LICENSING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Every two years, The Learning Tree is relicensed by State of Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. After each inspection is completed a report is filed and made part of the center's records. These reports are in the center office and available for parent viewing. Upon enrollment each parent will sign an acknowledgement form recognizing that they have the opportunity to view these reports at their convenience.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY WAIVER**

The Learning Tree loves capturing those special moments and occasions each day by using photographs as a regular part of our classroom environments and communication with our families. However, we do understand that for various safety reasons some children may not be permitted to be photographed. Upon enrolling at The Learning Tree, parents/guardians will sign a Photograph Waiver Form. This form dictates how their child's photo may be used within the centers.

We recognize that parents of many children in our care have opted not to allow their child to be photographed. For this reason, The Learning Tree does not permit parents, guardians, visitors or volunteers to take pictures or videos of any child other than their own while in the center, the classroom, surrounding properties or during center events.

## **TUITION & FEES**

As part of the enrollment process, you will be asked to sign The Learning Tree – Parent/Guardian Agreement that explains the terms and conditions of the items outlined in this handbook, including tuition and fees.

Tuition is determined by the number of days a parent contracts for and the program your child is enrolled in. Your tuition covers up to 10 hours of care per day. There are no refunds or credits for holidays or absences.

Tuition is due weekly on the first day of attendance (per contracted schedule) and every Wednesday by 6:00 p.m. thereafter.

Payments must be made by check, cash or through our online payment system called Tuition Express. All cash payments must be made at the office and can only be taken by the center's administrators. Cash payments should not be placed in the lobby tuition box. Checks should be made out to The Learning Tree, and your child's name should be written in the memo section of the check. Please only use black or blue ink while filling out the check.

Tuition Express application forms may be picked up in the office or we will be happy to email you one. Tuition Express allows you to go online at your convenience and pay your weekly tuition. Because Tuition Express payments take 24 hours to process, payments via Tuition Express should be paid by 1:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. Please note that if Tuition Express payments are not paid at this time, a \$30 late fee may occur.

We are more than happy to provide receipts for your company's deferred spending account. Please see our center Director to make arrangements.

The Learning Tree reserves the right to adjust all fees. Parents will be informed with a thirty-day advance notice via email.

## **REGISTRATION FEES**

At the time of enrollment and every September thereafter, a non-refundable registration and activity fee is required. If you choose to disenroll your child for any period of time throughout the year and then reenroll them at a later date, payment of both the registration fee and activity fee is required. Registration and Activity Fees are due on the Tuesday following Labor Day and required to be paid in full regardless of the number of days enrolled proceeding Labor Day.

## **LATE TUITION FEES**

A \$30.00 late payment fee is assessed if tuition is not paid on/or before the due date. Two weeks of non-payment of tuition will result in our services being terminated. Any unpaid fees or tuition will be sent to a collection agency.

## **OVERTIME FEES**

Our tuition is based on 10 hours of care per day. Children left in care beyond 10 hours of care will be charged \$5.00 per day, per child. Children left in care beyond 11 hours of care will be charged an additional \$10 per child.

Children picked up after our closing time of 6:30 p.m. will be charged an overtime rate of \$1.00 per minute per child. When you arrive you will be asked to sign the overtime sheet agreeing to pay the amount owed. The additional fee will be added to your weekly tuition rate for that week.

## **RETURNED CHECK FEES**

If we receive a check that is returned to us for any reason, you will be charged a return check fee of \$20.00. The fee and amount of the original check must be paid by cash, money order or cashier's check.

If you write two checks to the center that are returned for any reason within a six-month period, you will be required to make payments via money order or cash for the next 6-month period.

## **BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

For the convenience of our parents of school-age children, The Learning Tree offers Before & After Care, including transporting to and from local elementary and middle schools.

Tuition is based on the regular before and after school schedule contracted for. There are no make-up days for vacation or absences.

## **BACK UP CARE**

For those families of children under the age of 13, who are in need of care when their elementary or middle school is closed we are happy to offer a Back Up Care Program. On their days off from school, children will enjoy the same nutritious meals the rest of the center does as well as special activities to keep them busy and having fun. When school is out for longer breaks children will participate in offsite field trips. Separate registration fees do apply for this program.

## **SUMMER DAY CAMP**

For parents of schoolagers, The Learning Tree offers a Summer Day Camp program. Details about our Summer Day Camp are available in the office.

Enrollment for our Summer Day Camp is based on availability of space and registration fees can be paid at any time prior to the start of camp.

## **DISCOUNTS**

For the North, South, West and Howell locations, when multiple children from the same family attend the same center, a discount from the usual tuition fee may be applied once a second child begins attending and for each child who attends thereafter. To take advantage of this discount, full tuition must be paid for the youngest child. The discount is then applied to the older child enrolled from the same family.

## **PARENT REFERRAL BONUS**

If you refer a new family to any of our centers you are eligible to receive a Referral Bonus that will be applied directly to your account. The amount of the bonus is based on the referred family's tuition. In order to receive the bonus, the family in which you referred must be a new enrollee to The Learning Tree and they must include your name on the Enrollment Application where it asks how they heard about the center.

## **WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD**

Occasionally, due to family, work or medical circumstances a parent/guardian may have to withdraw their child/ren on a temporary basis. If such a situation occurs you are required to give the center a two-week notice in writing. You will still be responsible for all the tuition and fees for two weeks, whether or not your child is in attendance. In emergency situations the notice may be waived at the sole discretion of the Regional Director.

After you have withdrawn your child/ren, readmission will be based on space availability. If space is available, a registration and activity fee shall be paid at the current rate.

## **DISENROLLMENT**

Unfortunately certain circumstances may arise that result in it becoming necessary to discontinue a child's enrollment. This decision is based on the best interest of your child, other children in the class and our teachers. Every effort will be made to correct a situation beforehand.

Disenrollment may be the result of:

- Abuse of other children, teachers, or property by a child, parent or guardian
- Continued violations of procedures and policies by child, parent or guardian
- Inappropriate conduct by parent or guardian
- Non-payment of tuition

In addition The Learning Tree reserves the right to end enrollment of a child for any reason deemed appropriate. Whenever possible, prior notification will be provided to the parent.

## **CHILD ABSENCES**

If your child is going to be absent we ask that you please notify us. If your child is ill, we ask that you let us know the nature of the illness, particularly if your child may be contagious.

If your child attends our before and/or after school program and will be absent, we ask that you please notify us before 8:00 a.m. so we can notify our bus drivers. If while at school, your child becomes ill and is sent home, we ask that you also notify us, so at pick-up time our bus driver is not waiting for your child.

No refunds, credits or make-up days shall be made for absences.

**SCHEDULE CHANGES**

At times parent's work schedules may change and require a schedule change for your child. A request for a schedule change must be made in writing and is subject to availability of space. Please discuss your situation with the center Director as soon as possible. Please note that at the West and South Lyon locations a \$20 switch fee will be applied to your account should you require a schedule change for your child.

**ADDITIONAL DAYS**

Children that attend The Learning Tree on a part-time basis may add a day if space in your child's classroom is available. A request for additional day(s) must be in writing and given to an Administrator at least one week prior to requested day(s). You are responsible for payment once your request has been submitted and approved.

# **OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

## **DAYS & HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Learning Tree is open from 6:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

The center is closed for the following holidays on the day the holiday occurs:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
Independence Day	Christmas Day

If a holiday occurs on a Saturday, or Sunday, the center will be closed on the proceeding Friday or following Monday. There are no credits, refunds or make-up days given for holidays.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

We are proud to say that since The Learning Tree has opened in 1982, our doors have never closed due to inclement weather. Because we are in the business of providing care for children of working families, it is the policy of The Learning Tree to continue operation despite inclement weather conditions, acts of God or catastrophic events.

However, while every effort is made to provide care during our scheduled hours of operation, in the event of a weather related closure, emergency closure or closure due to a maintenance issue (including lack of power or water) during normal school hours, parents will be notified via email, text and our centers Facebook pages. Due to on-going expenses, tuition is not refunded for emergency closings.

# PERSONAL ITEMS

## **APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR SCHOOL**

Because we know that our parents need to be at work despite weather conditions, our center will remain open during inclement weather for your convenience. For your child to enjoy all the activities including outdoor play throughout the day, please dress your child in comfortable, washable play clothes. Please take into consideration the weather conditions as children are taken outside daily, weather permitting.

Unexpected changes in the weather may require a change of clothes. This may include having a jacket, coat, mittens, gloves and hats for days that become colder or the ability to change into lighter weight clothes for warmer days.

In the summer we ask that you send a swimsuit, tee shirt, water shoes and towel. Because sunscreen cannot be shared between children, each child should bring in a labeled bottle of sunscreen. In order to protect our asthmatic children, please refrain from bringing in aerosol sunscreen. If you choose to not provide sunscreen for your child, you will be asked to sign a waiver, releasing The Learning Tree Child Care Center of any liability associated with sun exposure and sunburns with your child.

During the winter months we ask you send snow pants, a winter coat, snowboots, mittens or gloves and a hat. Snow play is one of our favorite activities and we are outside playing at least twice a day if temperatures allow.

To help keep your child happy, safe and comfortable while in our care, please send an extra set of clothes to be left at the center. As always, please label all items with your child's first and last name.

For the protection of your child we strongly suggest that tennis shoes or other closed toe shoes be worn at all times; however, during the warmer months, sandals with straps along the back are permitted. Please refrain from sending your child in flip flops as these are not safe for running and climbing.

## **POSSESSIONS FROM HOME**

The Learning Tree cannot be responsible for any lost or damaged items and therefore we recommend that your child leave toys and personal items at home, with the exception of naptime buddies and "show and tell day". Show and tell items in the form of weapons, guns, action figures, etc, are not acceptable and should not be brought into the center. Children should refrain from bringing any electronics. This includes cell phones, tablets, laptops, ipods etc. These devices are not permitted in the center and will be held in the office until pick up.

## **LOST & FOUND**

If your child is missing anything, please inquire at the center's office as soon as possible. Unfortunately The Learning Tree cannot be responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.

# NUTRITION & MEALS

Healthy nutrition for the children we serve is not only one of our Core Values, it is a part of our curriculum. Meals are served family style, which may include the children assisting in table setting, serving and cleaning up. Our teachers sit with the children during meal times where conversation topics include healthy eating habits, discussing of the food groups and the benefits of healthy eating.

Breakfast is served from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. At 10:00 a.m. a mid-morning snack is offered. Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m. and an afternoon snack is available between 3:00 p.m. and 3:30p.m. Because many children do not get home until after 6:00 p.m., The Learning Tree offers another snack at 5:00 p.m.

The food served is both healthy and appealing to children. Organic fresh or organic frozen vegetables and fruits are used daily in our menus. Organic milk is served with breakfast and lunch as well. Our menus are posted on each Family Board and are available to parents on our website. Daily nutritional requirements are always met.

At times we may have to substitute one food for another, but parents can be assured the overall nutritional content of the menu is always maintained. Substitutions in the menu will be noted for parents.

To help protect children and teachers with severe food allergies, we cannot allow food to be brought into the center, including food for holidays or birthdays.

## **SPECIAL DIET REQUESTS**

If a child requires a special food accommodation due to medical or religious reasons, parents may be asked to provide the meals. If such is the case please meet with the center's Director to review your child's needs and determine what accommodations can be made. Because meals are included in our tuition, we cannot offer any cost adjustments or refunds if parents are providing food and/or meals. Doctor verification of medical reasons may be requested.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Celebrating birthdays is a very special occasion for children and their families. At The Learning Tree we will supply the birthday treat for you. A variety of recipes are available for your child to choose from. We will then provide all the ingredients for the treat and the children will make it together in the classroom. The teachers will go out of their way to make your child's day memorable. Games are played, birthday books are read and the classroom is decorated with birthday dishes, napkins and tablecloths.

If you still wish to provide the class with something special for your child's birthday here are a few suggestions:

- goodie bags with trinkets such as stickers, pencils, crayons etc.,
- party decorations,
- hats or noise makers,
- a classroom art project,
- a classroom gift such as a book dedicated to your child on their special day.

If you decide to have your child's birthday party off-site, please mail the invitations instead of leaving them in cubbies or lockers. If you give the stamped invitations to the office with the party list, we will be glad to address them for you.

### **PEANUT & NUT AWARE CENTER**

Nut allergies can be so severe that exposure to such items can go from skin rash and irritation to anaphylaxis and severe breathing impairments and/or vomiting in a matter of seconds after exposure. A child with a nut allergy can have a reaction simply by smelling nuts on someone's breath, or touching peanut oil residue left on a counter top or even another child's hand.

Because of the extreme nature of allergic reactions to peanuts, nuts and products containing nuts of any type that some children experience, The Learning Tree does not allow peanuts, nuts, coconuts and/or foods containing nuts, coconut or nut products on Learning Tree property. Please help keep our children safe by adhering to this policy.

While The Learning Tree does have a "no outside food policy" it is impossible to assure that this policy is adhered to 100% of the time. We trust, that our families are doing their due diligence and checking pockets and backpacks before their child comes into the center. However, we cannot guarantee this. If your child has consumed food prior to entering The Learning Tree, please thoroughly wash your child's hands before entering the classroom.

The Learning Tree works diligently to ensure the food that is purchased to prepare meals and snacks is not contaminated with nut or nut products. However we cannot guarantee that the manufactures and vendors we purchase these items through have the same mindset. While we make every effort to research the products we use, often times manufacturers change their processing locations, their machinery and/or the way they process or package their food without our knowledge. If and when this occurs we do everything we can remedy the situation quickly.

# ACTIVITIES

## **OUTDOOR AND GROSS MOTOR PLAY**

The outdoor play areas at The Learning Tree contain state of the art equipment which has been inspected and complies with the Consumer Product Safety Commission Standards. We provide separate play areas for our infant and toddlers with unique and age-appropriate equipment which also complies with the Consumer Product Safety Commission Standards.

All children in the center go outside at least twice per day. For the health and well-being of the children between the ages of 2-6 years of age, The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children between have 60-90 minutes of active outdoor play within an 8 hour day. In the colder months, temperatures should be 20 degrees or warmer with windchill in order for the children to be outside.

If your child cannot go outdoors due to documented medical reasons which stipulates restrictions, we will try to accommodate your request.

We ask that parents provide sunscreen for their child even in the winter. A Sunscreen Permission Form must be completed before sunscreen can be applied to your child. Please label your sunscreen with your child's first and last name. Please refrain from supplying sunscreen in aerosol cans.

If weather does not permit us to take the children outside, gross motor activities are provided for the children at least once in the morning and then again in the afternoon.

## **WATER PLAY**

During the warm weather children will be enjoying our Splash Pads at our center. We ask that your child have a pair of water shoes to use while on the Splash Pad.

School-agers may attend public swimming facilities as part of Summer Day Camp or during holiday breaks. We follow state regulations in regards to maintaining lower teacher/child ratios while a child is in the water. Parents are asked to sign a Swimming Permission Slip Form.

## **NAP AND REST TIME**

Naps or quiet time is essential for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and some pre-k kindergarten children. Infants sleep on-demand, according to their own schedule. For other age groups, children are encouraged to rest, but not required to sleep. Children who do not sleep are allowed to get up and participate in quiet activities, while still respecting others who may be sleeping.

Cots will be provided for children under school-age. We ask that parents supply and label a small sheet and blanket which can be easily stored in a plastic zippered bag. Nap items are sent home every Friday to be laundered.

# **FIELD TRIPS & TRANSPORTATION**

## **FIELD TRIPS**

As part of our curriculum we feel it is important to provide children with the opportunity to experience and learn about our community, the people in our community and the places around us. Whether an in-house field trip or a field trip outside the center, our teachers take a great deal of time researching the event to ensure it is safe and will be enjoyed by our children. The cost of all field trips, both in-house and off site, are included in your annual activity fee and no additional fees are required.

## **IN HOUSE FIELD TRIPS**

A few times a year a special guest artist, special visitor or program comes to our center for the enjoyment of all our children. Past guests have included Ms. Bev the Music Lady, local members of the police and fire department and the Bat Conservatory from Cranbrook Institute. Announcements of in-house field trips can be found on classroom calendars and in our newsletter. Parents are always welcome to attend an in house field trip.

## **OFF SITE FIELD TRIPS**

Off site field trips are part of our curriculum for children four years and older. You will be notified of a planned field trip in advance by posted information on the Family Board, on the classroom calendar, and in our monthly newsletter.

You will be asked to sign a separate authorization form which will include the date, time, location, special instructions or items to bring, and the anticipated time of arrival back at the center.

The following procedures are implemented when taking your child on a field trip:

- We must have the signed permission slip from you before your child gets on the bus.
- One or more teachers will always carry emergency medical consent forms and emergency contact information for your child.
- Teachers will have an attendance list of all children attending the field trip. Counts will be taken on the bus, during the field trip and before getting back on the bus.
- Teachers will have a first aid kit available at all times.
- Each teacher on the field trip will have a communication device to use in case of emergency.
- Teachers with training in CPR and first-aid are always present on a field trip.

Parents are more than welcome to come along on the field trip, but all fees must be paid by the parent and the parent must drive their own vehicle.

If you choose not to have your child attend the field trip, we cannot provide alternative care for your child during the time frame of the field trip.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation is provided for field trips and to and from school for our schoolagers. Each Learning Tree vehicle meets Michigan State Regulations and are inspected on a regular basis by a qualified mechanic.

We ensure that when transporting children:

- All proper loading and unloading procedures are followed.
- All children on our buses are fitted with shoulder harnesses where applicable.
- Each vehicle has a complete emergency kit including first-aid supplies, a fire extinguisher secured in the passenger areas and accessible only to teachers.
- All drivers have valid chauffeurs' licenses\* and have completed bus safety training.
- All Learning Tree buses are equipped with cell phones and a GPS system.
- An accurate list of children being transported is used when loading and unloading the bus.
- After returning to the center, the driver walks around the bus to ensure no child remains.

\* Learning Tree Management is immediately informed by the Michigan State Police of any driving violations by drivers.

# BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

## **POSITIVE GUIDANCE POLICY**

Our true goal at the Learning Tree is to help children develop the skill of self-discipline. We believe that children are more likely to develop this skill when they are treated with respect and given clear, consistent and fair limits for classroom behavior. Our teachers help the children set their own limits, understand the consequences of their actions and the reason behind our rules and expectations.

Only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction are used:

- Teachers will use encouragement of correct behavior rather than focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.
- Teachers will remind a child of expectations by using clear, positive statements.
- Teachers will direct behavior using positive statements.
- Only when deemed necessary and when appropriate for the child's age and development will brief supervised separation be used.

Under no circumstances are the following types of discipline allowed:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishments (such as pinching, shaking, humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, harsh or abusive language),
- Restriction of food, naps or toilet learning,
- Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying,
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment,
- Confining a child in an enclosed area,
- Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities,
- Excluding a child from daily learning experiences,
- Requiring a child to be silent or inactive for inappropriate period of time.

## **PROGRESSIVE GUIDANCE POLICY**

Unfortunately there are behaviors in which the well-being of other children, teachers or property are in jeopardy and therefore other discipline measures including repayment of damaged property or possible expulsion may occur. If at any time the behavior below occurs, the child exhibiting the behavior will be sent home immediately and a parent conference will be required within 24 hours.

These behaviors are, but are not limited to:

- Continual or habitual hitting, biting, shaking, pulling, scratching, spitting or inflicting any other physical harm on another.
- The malicious destruction or damage of Learning Tree, teachers or another child's property. If it is determined that a child's behavior directly resulted in the destruction or damage of property, the parents/guardians will be responsible for the repair or replacement costs.
- Bullying: mental or emotional cruelty such as humiliating, shaming, threatening, name calling, teasing, taunting, ridiculing or frightening another child.

In most instances, using our Behavioral Intervention Plan, in cooperation with parents and teachers and administration the inappropriate behavior and issues are resolved.

# **SAFETY & SECURITY**

Our school is equipped with a security system to protect the children in our care. This system ensures that only people with access will be allowed to enter the school. You will be given free access to the school during building hours. Upon enrollment, your Director will provide you with access and instructions for entry.

Please do not allow other persons to “piggyback” into the building when you enter our school. While we all want to be polite and hold the door for others, we cannot enforce the security system if parents allow others to enter at the same time they do.

## **DROP-OFF & PICK-UP**

### **Arriving At School**

For the safety of all children, please keep your child with you at all times, especially when exiting your vehicle in our parking lot. We also ask that you do not leave your car running in the parking lot at any time.

Our doors open at 6:30 a.m. and our teachers are on hand to welcome you and your child. Before escorting your child directly into their classroom, please stop at one of our touchscreen computers to sign your children in. When you do sign them in, a small ticket will print for each child. That ticket will need to be given to your child’s teacher in order to drop them off. Please note that without the ticket children will not be able to be dropped off. This ticket system ensures us that each child is signed in and should an emergency arise we will know exactly who is on our care at all times.

Because children must be supervised at all times, if you have more than one child at our school, please take your older child to their classroom first.

During the times between 6:30-8:00 a.m. and 5:00-6:30 p.m. classrooms may be combined. You will always know where your child is and specific age groups are never combined with an older age group.

### **Picking Up Your Child**

When arriving to pick-up your child, for the safety of others please do not leave your car running in the parking lot. Before you proceed to your child’s classroom, be sure to sign them out on the touch screen computer in the lobby. When you do sign them out a small ticket will print for each child. That ticket will need to be given to your child’s teacher in order to pick them up. Please note that without the ticket children will not be able to be picked up. This ticket system ensures us that each child is signed in and should an emergency arise we will know exactly who is on our care at all times.

If possible allow a few minutes for your child to complete whatever activity they are participating in. If you have two children, please pick up the younger one first. Please remember to sign your children out each day on our touchscreen computers.

The Learning Tree closes at 6:30 p.m. We ask that you make every effort to pick-up your child before closing time. If you are going to be late please call the office immediately. A late fee will be assessed for arriving at the center after closing time.

If we do not receive a call from you and cannot reach your emergency release contacts, we may be required to call local authorities to help us with the situation. Our teachers are not permitted to take your child home with them.

### **RELEASING OF CHILDREN**

Please notify the office any time someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up your child. We will only release a child to his or her parents/guardians and the persons listed on your child's information card. We will not release a child to anyone (other than a parent) under the age of eighteen, including siblings.

If a situation arises requiring that someone not on the child information card to pick up your child, prior written authorization must be provided to the Director. Government issued photo identification must be shown and The Learning Tree reserves the right to ask anyone, including parents/guardians, who may be picking up a child to show identification. Guests will be given a Guest Pass to use as their ticket to pick up your child and a Director will be happy to sign your child out.

Under no circumstances will children be allowed to leave the center unsupervised for another location. We cannot release a child to walk home.

### **VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

With your approval, we welcome other relatives to visit your child at school. For the safety of all children enrolled at our center, all visitors must provide current photo identification and sign-in at the office upon arrival. Teachers will accompany all visitors at all times.

Due to The Learning Tree's extensive training program and high standards, volunteers are not permitted at the center. If this policy should change the following rules would apply:

- All volunteers at The Learning Tree are screened through the Department of Human Services for substantiated child abuse and neglect records and the ICHAT system for criminal history and backgrounds before being present at the center.

A volunteer may not be present if they have been convicted of:

- a listed offense, as defined in section 2 of the sex offenders registration act, 1994 PA 295, MCL 28.722;
- child abuse or neglect;
- or a felony involving harm or threatened harm to an individual within the 10 years proceeding the first date of volunteering.

Volunteers at The Learning Tree are supervised at all times and are never permitted to be alone with children.

### **FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS AND PROCEDURES**

The Learning Tree conducts fire and emergency evacuations regularly. Parents, teachers and children will not be made aware of the drill date or time, as this is the most effective way to assess the success of our drills. However, we will do our best to notify you after so you are able to talk to your children about the drill. During a fire/emergency drill, parents may not sign children into or out of the center, but must wait until the drill is complete and the children and teachers have reentered the building. Parents can wait with their child's class in the designated safe areas outside the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real evacuation, the Director will inform the teachers that the school must be evacuated. Parents will be notified as soon as possible via email or phone. If it becomes

necessary to remove the children from Learning Tree property, children will be taken to the emergency evacuation site. In the event of an emergency evacuation, you may be contacted and asked to pick up your child.

Teachers are trained yearly and prepared to handle emergency situations.

In the event that the center must go into LOCKOUT or LOCKDOWN, parents will be notified via email or phone as soon as possible. During a LOCKOUT all exterior doors and windows to the building will be locked. Children will be moved to safe place within the inside of the building until the situation is resolved. In this case, and for the protection of everyone, no one is allowed to come in or go out of the school with proper identification. During a LOCKDOWN all exterior doors and windows to the building will be locked. Children will be moved to safe place within the inside of a classroom with lights off and blinds closed. In this case, and for the protection of everyone, no one is allowed to come in or go out of the school until cleared by emergency personnel.

# INFANT & TODDLERS

## REQUIRED ITEMS

For the comfort of your baby we ask that you bring the following on a daily basis:

- 3 changes of clothing
- Sleep Sack
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Ointments if needed
- Receiving blanket – used only to comfort your baby or on walks
- Enough prepared formula or breast milk for one day
- Jar food and cereal (when applicable)

All items must be labeled with your child's first and last name. Infant belongings (soiled clothing, used/unused bottles, etc.) must be taken home nightly and laundered or sanitized.

Infant are fed, changed and placed in a crib to sleep on demand. They are only placed in their cribs to sleep. Parents are encouraged to visit the center at any time to feed, play and interact with your baby. Breast feeding moms, are provided a private area to breast feed if they so choose.

Up to the age of 12 months daily records are kept on your infants' feedings, naps and diaper changes. This is all available on Kid Reports.

## INFANT SAFE SLEEP

As part of The Learning Tree's ongoing effort to keep the infants enrolled in our care safe, we have adopted the following Infant Safe Sleep Policy.

- Infants are always placed to sleep on their back, no matter their age. When infants can easily turn over from their back to their stomach, they can be allowed to adopt to whatever position in which they prefer to sleep.
- Infants may not sleep in or on anything other than a crib. If an infant falls asleep in a bouncy seat, the floor, a mat etc., they will be moved immediately to a crib.
- In some instances an infant has a medical condition in which the infant's doctor has recommended special sleeping accommodations. In these situations a note from the infant's physician will be required in order to accommodate such a request. Note should include medical condition child has, date range that accommodation is to be followed and specific instructions as to what the sleeping accommodation should be.
- Nothing should be placed in the crib with the infant or draped over the side of the crib- no blankets, pillows, stuffed animals etc. Infants may not use wubbanubs.
- Bibs and pacifier clips will be removed before infant is placed in the crib.
- Infants who arrive asleep in their car seat will be moved immediately to a crib.
- Infants may be swaddled until 2 months of age. After 2 months infants cannot be swaddled.
- After 12 months of age infants must be placed on a cot to sleep.

## FOOD & FORMULA

Parents/guardians who have children in our infant program will need to provide all food and formula until your child is ready to enjoy The Learning Tree meal program. To get your baby off to a good start in the morning, please do the first feeding at home.

We ask that you please follow the guidelines below with regard to food and formula.

- All food and bottles must be labeled with the child's first and last name and dated on a daily basis. Bottles and food that is not properly labeled cannot be given to your child.
- Bottles must be premade at home.
- Only un-opened jars of food and/or cereal can be brought into the center.
- All partially used formula will be disposed of daily.
- Upon feeding, baby food will be placed in a bowl to feed the infant. Food that is left uneaten in the bowl will be discarded. However, if your infant is only eating half a container/jar we can empty half the container/jar into the bowl and place the original container/jar back into the fridge for you to take home that night and serve. We however are not able to serve that container/jar of food the next day.
- Each bottle and nipple supplied by the parent shall be used for a single feeding only. Bottles and nipples will be rinsed and returned to the parents.

Homemade baby food is permitted with these guidelines:

- Baby food must be placed in a glass storage container.
- Since homemade baby food must be refrigerated, new food must be brought in daily. We are not able to serve food that was brought in the previous day.
- Container must be labeled with child's first and last name, date and the contents.
- Uneaten food will be discarded.
- Since homemade baby food is generally frozen after it is made we ask that frozen baby food be taken out of the freezer at home the evening prior and allowed to be thawed overnight in the fridge.
- Homemade baby food may not be warmed up in the microwave. If your child's food does need to be warmed up it will be placed in a bowl of hot water within the glass container it was originally sent in.

When formula is discontinued, the following provisions shall apply:

- The Learning Tree only provides and uses organic whole homogenized vitamin D fortified cow's milk, unless otherwise directed by the parent or physician.
- Solid foods are introduced to children according to parents or physician's instructions.

### **MILK AUTHORIZATION FORM FOR CHILDREN 2-2 ½ YEARS**

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs states that children over 2 years of age not be served Whole Milk. However, as part of our continuing quest to ensure each child in our care receives the best possible nutrition, parents of children 2- 2 ½ years of age may choose if they would like their child to have Organic Vitamin D Whole Milk or Organic Skim Milk. A Milk Authorization Form is provided to you in order to choose your preference. If we do not receive the form back, your child will be served Organic Skim milk per State of Michigan licensing requirements.

### **DIAPERS**

Families whose children wear diapers must provide diapers to accommodate the child's needs and replenish them as needed. Diapering is done in designated areas for the health and safety of both child and teacher. The Learning Tree is happy to supply diaper wipes.

The Learning Tree does accept families who have chosen to cloth diaper their child. We ask that you bring in clean cloth diapers/inserts daily and supply a water proof sealable bag to place soiled diapers in. Learning Tree teachers are not able to rinse out cloth diapers.

## **TOILET LEARNING**

Learning to use the toilet is a gradual process that takes place over a period of time as a child's body matures. Successful toilet learning depends upon the physical, cognitive and language development of the child. For example, for a child to be ready for toilet learning he or she must:

- Be aware of bladder and bowel fullness.
- Have the muscle development to control elimination.
- Have the language and locomotor skills to signal the need to caregivers.
- Have the gross motor and fine motor skills to get to the toilet on time, remove clothing, and then to actually use the toilet.

As you can see these are complex abilities that develop over an extended period of time.

A child shows readiness to begin toilet learning when he recognizes his diaper needs to be changed. At this point, a child may be ready to learn and able to control bowels and bladder. Beginning the toilet learning process too early will cause frustration for children. Toilet learning is recommended for children between the ages of 2 and 3 years old.

A child's cues and mannerisms initiate toilet learning. These may include verbal requests, gestures of pulling down pants, leading the caregiver to the bathroom, squirming in place and pointing gestures.

We will be sensitive to these cues by asking the child to use the toilet, assisting the child on scheduled visits to the bathroom when they are most likely to use the toilet, giving frequent verbal reminders during the day, posting pictures of sequencing potty routines and communicating with you to establish consistency between school and home.

This growth period is a natural progression of independence. Toileting accidents, which will happen frequently before children master this complex task and are treated respectfully. You must bring at least three full changes of clothes including underwear, pants, shirts, socks and an extra pair of shoes. If the child has an accident teachers, using gloves, will assist in changing clothes. For health and safety reasons, soiled clothing will not be washed or rinsed by the center. All soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and returned to you for pick up at the end of the day.

Children will be assisted, as needed, when using the bathroom. Children will flush the toilets and be assisted washing their hands with soap and water. All efforts by the child will be positively acknowledged and encouraged.

## **BITING**

If you are a parent of an older infant or toddler chances are high that your child will bite or will be bitten by a friend. Experts in the field of child development agree that biting while very stressful is within the range of expected behaviors among toddlers 13 months-2 ½ years of age.

At the first sign of biting, we will evaluate the environment and activities at the time the incident occurred. If warranted we will make adjustments in the environment, routines or activities that occurred.

If a bite occurs the teacher will first attend to the bitten child by comforting and gently cleaning the bitten area with soap and water. Teachers will complete an accident form for you to sign.

The child who has bitten will be closely supervised. An incident report for the child who has bitten will be completed and the teacher will discuss the biting with that child's parents.

Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. If excessive biting incidents occur in one day or skin is broken during a bite, the parents of the child who has bitten will be called to pick up their child to be excluded from The Learning Tree for the remainder of the day. Uncooperative parents will have their child's services terminated.

Children older than 3 years of age may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use the discipline procedures outlined in the Positive Behavior and Guidance section of this handbook, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior. Uncooperative parents will have their child's service terminated. If a child bites who is over the age of 3, the parents will be called to pick up their child to be excluded from The Learning Tree for the remainder of the day. Furthermore, children, in the older age groups, who bite 3 times in a school year, will have their services terminated. The safety of all the children in the program is of the utmost concern of The Learning Tree.

Teachers cannot discuss with either parent the identity of the child who bit or was bitten, nor can teachers discuss the medical history of either child.

# HEALTH & MEDICAL GUIDELINES

## MAINTAINING A CLEAN AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

It is our commitment to our families to provide a clean and healthy environment and to take precautionary steps to prevent the outbreak of illness.

With that in mind all areas of the center are cleaned on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. For the well-being of our families, teachers and children, we have chosen to use Terafore, a green 100% biodegradable plant based product. This is a commercial cleaning product that does the tough job of killing germs while not releasing volatile compounds.

We promote cleanliness and good hygiene with families by requesting frequent handwashing, including before entering our classrooms.

## MEDICATION DISPENSING

We are more than happy to provide your child with medication while in accordance with our policies, as well as state regulations.

Medication parental permission forms are to be filled out completely and on a weekly basis if needed.

Any medication brought by you for your child must be:

- In the original container
- Labeled with the child's first and last name
- Labeled with the date and dosage
- Include directions to administer the medication
- Include name of physician prescribing the medication
- Include expiration date
- Possible side effects
- A medicine spoon must be provided for any oral medication.

For non-prescription/over the counter medication:

- Children under two years of age must have a doctor's note stating the exact dosage and frequency of the non-prescription medication provided.
- Children over two years of age can be administered non-prescription medication without a note from doctor as long as the medication is in the original container. Medication will be administered based on what the instructions to the medication state unless a parent requests a lesser dose.
- Medication parental permission forms are filled out completely for non-prescription medication. Included on this form are the exact time(s) the medication is to be given and the parent/guardian's signature.
- A medicine spoon must be provided for any oral medication.

Teachers will record the following information:

- Name of the child to whom medication was given
- Name of medication
- Date, time and amount given
- Name of teacher administering medication

Medication is stored in a locked area inaccessible to children. We will refrigerate medications if instructed on the prescription label. No injections will be administered, with the exception of Epi-Pens and Insulin. The Learning Tree cannot follow instructions from parents that contradict the instructions of the physician or the instructions on the medicine's packaging.

### **ILLNESS & EXCLUSION POLICY**

The Learning Tree has devoted much time and research into developing illness policies that are in the best interest of the children and teachers. We cannot guarantee that we are fully able to contain or prevent the spread of all illnesses.

When we establish guidelines, we understand that sick child care exclusion guidelines that are too stringent can be an enormous burden for working parents. On the other hand, lax standards can cause increased illnesses among children, staff and families. Because caring for sick children is ultimately the responsibility of the parent/guardians, please be prepared to make alternative care arrangements.

During certain outbreaks, it may be necessary for The Learning Tree to put into affect additional or more stringent policies and procedures for the well being of all children and families.

Parents will be notified if their child has any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 101.0 degrees or more
- Rash (undiagnosed)
- Diarrhea; increased number and water content of stools
- Vomiting one time

Children with solely these conditions will be permitted to stay at The Learning Tree. If the child worsens, becomes lethargic or other symptoms appear, the parents will be notified to pick up their child.

Exclusion criteria must meet the needs and limitations of The Learning Tree. As adapted from the Academy of Pediatrician's report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases, children with any of the conditions below must be excluded until the symptoms/conditions have been resolved and the child has been symptom free for at least 24 hours or have been on medication for 24 hours.

- Herpes gingivostomatitis, thrush, mouth sores, or ulcers
- Conjunctivitis
- Children with specific infections such as but not limited to: Pertussis, Strep Throat, Head Lice and Scabies, Coxsackie Disease, Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease, Chicken Pox, Impetigo, Mumps, Measles, Rubella, Hepatitis A
- Influenza
- Discolored eye, ear, or nose discharge
- Evidence of severe illness: lethargy, unusual sleepiness, irritability, prolonged crying, inconsolability, obvious discomfort, and labored, difficult or rapid breathing, extreme or uncontrollable coughing, wheezing, poor appetite

A child may be excluded from The Learning Tree when illness and/or symptoms prevent the child from participating in activities, when the illness/symptoms result in greater care than the child care staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children, or when staff is not trained in specific methods of care.

Parents will be called to make arrangements to pick up a child too ill to remain in care. We ask that children be picked up within one hour. Children absent due to a contagious (or suspected contagious) disease may not return to The Learning Tree without a written clearance from a physician. Once a child returns to The Learning Tree after being absent from an illness, they must be well enough to be able to participate in all activities. Unfortunately due to staffing purposes, children can not be left inside during outdoor play.

In the case of a medical emergency, The Learning Tree has permission to administer first aid or obtain emergency medical treatment in child/ren's best interest.

If the center become aware that a staff member or child in care has contracted a communicable disease, we will notify the parents the name of the communicable disease and symptoms of the disease. Parents will be notified via email and a disease bulletin will be posted in the classroom.

### **ALLERGIES AND EPI PENS**

Often times families enroll with The Learning Tree whose children have an allergy in which an epi-pen may need to be administered. In this situation, a parent and the child's doctor should complete an Allergy Emergency Plan to keep on file at the center. Parents should supply The Learning Tree with their child's epi pen that is to be kept at the center. All epi pens should be stored in the original prescription box and must contain two epi pens per the instructions. Parents are required to replace the epi pen upon expiration as The Learning Tree can not administer or keep on site expired medication.

### **ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS**

Your child may be involved in a minor injury, accident or incident while in our care. When an injury or accident occurs our teachers will perform basic first aid to treat an injury. Parents will receive a phone call to inform them of the situation and an Accident Report will be completed detailing the circumstances surrounding the injury. Parents will be asked to sign the Accident Report at pick up time.

Children are often involved in incidents which do not require First Aid. These are often related to behavioral changes and may include sudden mood swings, difficulty getting along with other children or a teacher, trouble sleeping or eating at school or choosing to not follow classroom or center guidelines. We believe that communication between school and home is pertinent in order to correct these incidents. If your child is involved in an incident that you need to be made aware of an Incident Form will be completed and presented to you at pick up time and briefly discussed with you. However, should you feel it necessary to discuss the incident further, we will be more than happy to set up a conference. Parents will be asked to sign the Incident Report.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

If the illness or injury requires more than basic first aid, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child to transport home or to a medical care facility for treatment. In the event of a severe medical emergency, we may act under the authority of the signed Authorization for Medical treatment of a minor form in your Enrollment Packet and take the emergency measures deemed necessary for the medical care and protection of your child, including contacting EMS. In the event that we cannot contact you, we will make continuous efforts to contact you or someone listed by you as an emergency contact. If your child is transported by EMS, an Administrator or teacher will accompany your child and remain with them until a parent/guardian arrives.

At all times teachers certified in First-Aid and CPR are on site at the center.

### **PEST CONTROL**

The Learning Tree will control pests to protect the health and safety of children and teachers, and parents. In the event that we have to use a pesticide, we will only use those products registered and use in accordance with federal, state and local laws and will be given 48 hours advanced notice. Only individuals licensed by the state will use pesticides. We will provide you with notification via email and a posting. Information regarding the specific type of pesticide will be available in the office. Parents will also receive an annual notice every September stating the ways in which you will be notified of pesticide applications.

### **CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES**

Please notify us immediately if your child has allergies. If a child requires medication for a life threatening allergic reaction (i.e. bee stings) your child's medication may be kept at the center and administered when necessary. Please contact a Director to discuss your child's allergies and we will provide you with additional information.

### **ZONO**

The Learning Tree is proud to be one of the only child care centers in Michigan that be sanitizes with the ZONO, a revolutionary chemical-free sanitizer that sanitizes toys, stuffed animals, cots, crib mattresses, electronics, dress up clothes, crayons, and more! Items are simply placed in the ZONO, and the ZONO does all of the sanitizing work for us, *with no chemicals*. This will allow us to focus on the work we enjoy-- taking care of and teaching your children.

The ZONO is a chemical free sanitizing system that is based upon technology used in the medical device and food processing industries. The ZONO generates humidity and ozone using ultraviolet lights and ambient air inside the air-tight cabinet. This creates a sanitizing environment for common bacteria\* and a disinfecting environment for viruses+. The ZONO cabinet provides a safe environment for sanitizing. Ozone monitoring sensors are located inside and outside the cabinet to ensure the ZONO is operating safely. Visit [www.zonosanitech.com](http://www.zonosanitech.com) for more information.

The ZONO kills 99.9% of common bacteria\* and 99.99% of viruses+. We believe that it is an important part of a comprehensive sanitizing routine.

Is the ZONO environmentally friendly? Yes, the earth-friendly technology reduces the time, energy, and water once needed to sanitize, reducing our environmental footprint.

The ZONO uses less than half an ounce of water per cycle and does not get the items wet or hot. The ZONO does not use heat to sanitize. The ZONO does not wash or clean items.

\*Staphylococcus Aureus, Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, Escherichia Coli, Streptococcus Pneumoniae, Streptococcus Pyogenes, Shigella Dystenriae, Salmonella Enteritidis, and Pseudomonas Aeruginosa on non-porous, semi-porous and porous surfaces. +Norovirus on non-porous surfaces.

# LICENSING AND LEGAL REGULATIONS

## MANDATED REPORTING

All child care providers and volunteers are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Health and Human Services. In compliance with the law, our procedure regarding suspected child abuse is as follows:

- Department of Health and Human Services will be contacted immediately
- We are required to file a written report within 72 hours after making the telephone report

## MICHIGAN LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Our centers go through a relicensing inspection every two years by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. After each inspection a report is made and submitted to the state. A copy of that report is kept in the office and is available for parents to view.

## TEACHERS SCREENING

In compliance with the State of Michigan regulations, all employees of The Learning Tree are subject to and will not be present in the center until:

1. Annual Criminal background checks through the Michigan State Police registry (ICHAT).
2. Documentation from Department of Health and Human Services that they have not been named in a central registry case as a perpetrator of child abuse or neglect
3. Physicals including TB test are conducted
4. Reference check prior to working in the classrooms.
5. Driving record checks through the Michigan Secretary of State, any infractions are immediately reported to the Regional Manager.

A staff member shall not be present in the center if they have been convicted of any of the following:

- A listed offense as defined in section 2 of the sex offenders registration act, 1994 PA 295, MCL 28.722
- Child abuse or neglect
- A felony involving harm or threatened harm to an individual within 10 years immediately preceding the date of hire

## CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Information pertaining to a child and their family is kept confidential at all times. Occasionally, records may need to be viewed by a regulatory, legal or accreditation agency. Information concerning your child will not be released, whether orally or written, to any individual without the written permission of the parent/guardian, unless such disclosure is mandated by licensing rules, other statues, or by a court of law. Children files are otherwise confidential and monitored by the center's administration team. Parents are more than welcome to view their child's file at any time.

If your child is involved in an incident involving another child, for the protection of concerned, our teachers cannot offer the other child's identity to you.

# **FAMILY EXPECTATIONS**

## **RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES**

At times issues may arise that you have concerns or questions about. If the issue involves your child's classroom we encourage you to discuss the matter first with your child's teacher. If you feel the issue needs to be discussed further you can always speak with an administrator.

With regard to an issue with a policy or procedure, please feel free to contact a member of our center's administrative team at any time. They are always available via email or by phone.

Please feel free to contact our Regional Director if you feel your issue or concern has not been resolved. All contact information is located at the front of your handbook. It is our goal to work with you to resolve any issue that you may have.

The Learning Tree Child Care Center strives to create a family like atmosphere consisting of owners, directors, teachers, chefs, parents, grandparents, children and support staff. Like in any family communication, partnership and respect is the key to success and a positive relationship. While The Learning Tree takes every effort to ensure each family is beyond satisfied with the service they receive there may be times in which a family has a concern about a policy, procedure or care of their child. Families are expected to bring those concerns to the Director of the center in a timely, respectful and dignified manner in order for the problem to be resolved. While we will make every effort to rectify the situation immediately some situations may take a longer time to resolve. We appreciate the respect given to us to address the problem in a timely manner. The Learning Tree understands that during these circumstances emotions are sometimes heightened; however threatening, blackmailing or slandering of The Learning Tree or its employees will not be tolerated and will result in termination of care. Social media posts, verbal defamation of character to others and written publications are not appropriate venues to err transgressions about The Learning Tree. If The Learning Tree discovers that a family has chosen this means to communicate frustrations opposed to speaking to an appropriate Learning Tree employee, care will be terminated.

## **APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE IN THE CENTER**

Parents/Guardians and their guests must use appropriate language while on Learning Tree property. Foul language of any type is not permitted on center property, which includes our parking lots and playgrounds.

If a problem or concern arises, the first step is to move the discussion to a private area where you can express your concern with the Director. We will do our best to address any problem or concern you have.

## **SMOKING**

Smoking is prohibited on all center property, including our parking lot and playgrounds.

## **PHYSICAL & VERBAL DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN ON CENTER PROPERTY**

We do not allow parents or guests to use any type of corporal punishment on a child, whether enrolled in our program or not, while on center property. This includes our parking lot, playgrounds and bathrooms.

Further, while verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for a parent to verbally abuse, threaten, or shame their child while on our property. Doing so can cause undue

embarrassment and emotional distress to your child, other children and our teachers. Because of the seriousness of this, violations of this policy can result in immediate disenrollment from our program.

### **ADDRESSING OTHER CHILDREN**

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 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.

### **THREATENING BEHAVIOR**

We have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for our employees, the children and the families we serve. Therefore, we have a zero tolerance with regard to threats or threatening behavior in our center, whether the threat comes from a child or an adult, regardless of the intended target. This includes, but is not limited to, threats to bodily harm to someone or threats of retaliation in anyway. This type of behavior can result in immediate disenrollment from our program.

### **FIREARMS & WEAPONS**

At no times is any person permitted to possess fire arms, ammunition, or other weapons on center property, or at events sponsored by the school. For persons authorized to carry concealed weapons, we respectfully ask that any/all weapons be left in your locked vehicle during the period of time when in our center. Any violation of this policy will result in immediate disenrollment from our program as well as criminal prosecution.

### **CUSTODY & VISITATION ISSUES**

It is our policy to avoid interference with custody issues with regard to the children in our care. Without court documents to the contrary, we assume both parents/guardians have equal rights to pick-up/drop off, visit, or request documents about their child.

It is the parents/guardian's responsibility to provide us copies of court documents and/or legal parent agreements clarifying the rights and responsibilities regarding the time your child is in our center. We follow the last court documents on file, without prejudice, with regard to either parent/guardian.

### **HIRING OF LEARNING TREE TEACHERS**

We also know that often time teachers and parents develop friendships as a result of the close collaboration. We strongly discourage our employees from making independent child care arrangements with families at our centers. However, in the event you ask a Learning Tree teacher to babysit for your family outside the employee's normal work hours and/or outside our center hours, it must be done away from school and with the full knowledge that the sitter is

doing so as a private citizen and not as a Learning Tree employee. We cannot be responsible for our employees away from the center outside their working hours and will not be liable for their actions. If you hire an employee to work for you and that employee resigns their position with us in order to accept your employment offer, you will be required to pay The Learning Tree a \$1500 finder's fee.

At times we understand that an emergency may arise; however, Learning Tree employees are absolutely prohibited from transporting any children to and from the center in their personal vehicles without a signed Release of Liability from the parent/guardian.

**PERSONS APPEARING TO BE IMPAIRED BY DRUGS OR ALCOHOL**

If a parent or other adult enters the center to pick-up a child and appears to be intoxicated either by the smell of alcohol or his or her actions appears to be impaired, for the protection of both the adult and the child, we have the right to refuse to release the child to them and call another contact on the child's information card. If at any time the intoxicated individual becomes aggressive or unruly, the police will be called.