

Learning Tree Development Center

Parent Policy Handbook

2025 - 2026
School Year

Welcome to Learning Tree!

We are delighted that you have chosen our center to provide for the needs of your family. You and your family are encouraged to visit our center prior to the first day of enrollment to give our teachers, and your child, an opportunity to meet and become better acquainted. It will make separating on the first day a bit easier. The Parent Handbook has been written to describe our program, philosophy, policies, and all the practical details that go into making each day as happy and successful as possible. Please carefully read this handbook and keep it for future reference. The staff at Learning Tree would be happy to address any of your questions or concerns.

Welcome!

Barb Watson

Center Phone Number: 952.288.4464

Owner/Directors Email: barb.learningtree@gmail.com

Website: www.learningtreedevelopmentcenter.com

Facebook "Share Site" (PRIVATE FB Group Page): Check your email after enrollment for access info

Facebook: "Like" us at Learning Tree Development Center

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Learning Tree is located inside of St. Luke's Lutheran Church. In the classroom setting, children learn through a variety of interest centers that include; dramatic play, cognitive and manipulative activities, science, math, art, reading, music and writing.

In addition to the classroom setting, children are able to play outdoors on the St. Luke's Playground, and explore the neighborhood around us.

Licensed by the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services and the City of Bloomington, Learning Tree can care for up to 38 children from ages 6 weeks - 6 years. Center hours are from 7:30am - 4:30pm Monday - Friday. (may vary based on need)

Program Orientation

Mission: Provide quality childcare to all children regardless of race, creed or color by providing a safe and caring environment with a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Nurturing, guiding and empowering each child while respecting each family's individual values, cultures and difference.

Program Goals: At Learning Tree, our belief is that your child learns by doing and by experiencing. Children can do this by having the environmental freedom of guided choice, free choice and exploration. Our teaching staff facilitates positive experiences by structuring the environment in a way that promotes guidance and age-appropriate behaviors. The opportunities for social interaction, intellectual growth and emotional expression are at the forefront of our thought process when scheduling weekly lesson plans, daily activities and while developing curriculum.

Our program is designed to maximize each child's individual development. With this in mind, our activities focus on the actual process of learning. Our emphasis is on the experience that the child is having while the activity is taking place. This approach lends focus to the learning experience of activities rather than what the result may or should be. We know that children gain so much knowledge through processes and procedures. For example: The process of painting during a project is more important than what has been painted. Learning to build with blocks is more important than what is being built. Of course, as children grow, develop and change; the end goals become more important, valuable and lead to their growth. We acknowledge however, that the result becomes important as children develop. We're also here for that stage and are prepared to help foster these new experiences as well.

Below is an outline that lists the broad goals and responsibilities of our teaching staff and of what is implemented daily through curriculum and developmentally appropriate experiences. Our goals include:

- Respecting individual and cultural differences through discussion and by modeling appropriate behaviors
- Helping each child to understand that not only do they have feelings and the right to feel that way, but that every person including parents, teachers and friends also have feelings and that it's important to respect every person's right to their feelings.

- We promote and encourage each child to build trust in people outside of their familial environment. We do this by letting the children know and by showing them that they can count on us to be here to support them.
- Our early learning environment encourages the lifelong skill of independence. Every child is encouraged to live up to their own personal and age-appropriate level of self-reliant skill set.
- We recognize that a child initiating self-play is a primary means of cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. We will always encourage each child to do so in a way that promotes their overall growth.
- Enhancing a child's self-esteem, self-worth, self-awareness and self-confidence is at the heart of the learning and thriving experience. We will always create an environment that runs parallel to these goals and support a curriculum plan that helps every child to successfully achieve these important lifelong insights.
- Every child will be provided age and developmental opportunities to engage in math, science, reading, memory skills, language development and cordial science.
- LTDC teaching staff will provide opportunities for children to be able to foster creativity and self-expression through the outlets of art, music and dramatic play activities.

Multicultural Policy: Learning Tree is committed to an environment that fosters multicultural education. We share a desire and a commitment to human rights, dignity of the individual and to social justice. We strive to create a program that in its truest form reflects the lives of our children, their families, our staff, our community and the world in which we live. By fully embracing the impact that cultural values have on families, we make every effort to provide culturally responsive early childhood experiences that affirm human differences and the right that every family is entitled to regarding the lives that they choose for themselves. We strive to recognize, appreciate and show respect toward the uniqueness of each child.

We make a daily commitment to multicultural education by:

- Recognizing the beauty, value and contribution that each family provides to our learning environment.

- Introducing the children to other cultures through curriculum and classroom activities.
- Encouraging the children to respect the differing cultural aspect of each one of their classmates.
- Welcoming every child's ability to speak with, play with and grow with children and staff members who are different from themselves.
- Encouraging children to share their "home life" experiences so that we may get to know them individually.
- Encouraging families to share cultural experiences so that we may have a better understanding as to the crucial role that this experience brings to our shared classroom experiences.
- Fostering communal experiences which foster living positively and cooperatively in our diverse world.
- Encouraging each child to challenge unfair treatment of those around them and giving support to dispute these behaviors in a positive manner.

By supporting children early on in learning to live cooperatively and positively amongst people of different beliefs, religions and cultures, we hope to make an impact on how they perceive the world around them.

Licensing: LTDC is licensed by the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services and the City of Bloomington to provide care for up to 31 children ages 6 weeks - 9 years. The State of MN Department of Human Services and the City of Bloomington Health Department regulate the care we provide and review our program through unannounced visits and regularly scheduled re-licensing visits. We are required to meet their standards for staffing, discipline, health, safety, curriculum, equipment and materials, nutrition, records and reports.

Center Closings: Learning Tree is open year round as listed on our calendar. If inclement weather happens, and the decision to close is made, parents will be notified via the Remind app. The decision to close will be made as soon as we can to let families make other arrangements if necessary. If this happens in the middle of the day, parents will be notified via email and the Remind app.

Staffing: Learning Tree is staffed by professionals with varying degrees of education and experience. All of our teachers have a Bachelor's Degree, Associates Degree or CDA in Early Childhood Education or a related field. All staff receives their training previous to employment as well as on-going training to develop and strengthen their skills. All of our Professional Staff are certified in CPR, First Aid, AHT and SUID.

Our typical teacher-child ratio is 1:4 for Infants, 1:7 for Toddlers, 1:10 for Preschool.

Rest Time: All children in attendance (toddlers and preschool) will be required to rest on a cot/mat during Rest Time at 1. We will make every effort to provide an environment that is quiet enough for those who need to nap yet not too restrictive for those who do not. Children who are awake after lying down for 1/2 hour will participate in quiet activities while children who have fallen asleep continue to nap. All Children will be awakened by 3:00.

If your child needs a blanket, please bring on and make sure your child's name is on it. **These must be taken home and laundered weekly.**

Please do not bring toys which children will want to play with during rest time. Teachers assist children in resting by providing soothing music and rubbing backs. Children are not required to sleep, but are expected to rest quietly on their cots/mats during this time.

Please keep in mind that if children are tired, they will fall asleep on their own and we WILL NOT wake them or prevent them from sleeping based on the request of a parent. The only things we can do is to NOT rub their back (help them fall asleep).

Parking: St. Luke's has parking available directly outside of our doors. If you will be leaving your car for a period of time (ie - you are meeting someone thus leaving one vehicle here, you take the bus) please do not park in the front spots. Leaving these spots open for families who are dropping off and leaving are preferred.

Secured Entrance: Learning Tree has a secured entrance to assist us in limiting access to who can enter the center. Parents of all children will need to purchase (refundable when returned) a key fob for \$25. Friends and relatives who occasionally drop off or pick up your child will have to enter thru door "E" by ringing the doorbell. We need to check the identification of anyone who is picking up your child who is unfamiliar to us.

Please help us make this entrance as secure as it can be, please do not hold the door open for anyone! If another parent is behind you, let the door close for them to use their own fob. It is important to use your key fob to enter the building every day. We understand that you may occasionally forget, but also remember that it takes time away from the children when we have to continually let families in.

Enrollment/Billing Policies

Admission Procedures: Families interested in enrolling their child should contact our Director/Owner for information. Reservation Forms are available in the Child Care office as well as on our website www.learningtreedevelopmentcenter.com.

Your Registration Form will be good for the entirety of your enrollment at Learning Tree. If Child Care Fees increase, you might be asked to either fill out a new form, or sign a paper indicating the increase.

Once you register and pay the Registration Fee, your child will have a secured spot in our center. At the meeting with the Director, you will receive all the Paperwork required by the State of MN to complete your child's reservation. If a child is placed on the waiting list for some or all of the desired hours, we will keep parents informed of openings that might occur as those enrolled adjust their schedules.

Scheduling Options: Learning Tree Development Center offers Half Day, Full Day and Full Week Child Care options. Hourly Options will be based on availability.

We do not have a minimum number days required per week.

Regardless of whichever schedule option your child is on, you must always follow the schedule that you chose at registration.

Hours of Operation: Learning Tree Development Center will be open Monday - Friday 730-430. If you need hours outside of our scheduled hours, please talk with the Director to see if we can accommodate your schedule.

Extra Days / Extended Hours: If you need child care at a time that you are not normally scheduled or want to extend a day, follow these instructions:

- Fill out an Extra Day/Extended Hours Form at least two days in advance.
- Confirm the request has been approved by the classroom teacher and/or director. Your request must be approved. Unapproved requests will not be honored.

All schedule considerations must be approved. The center does not accept children at unscheduled times unless a previous request has been approved. This is necessary to provide adequate staffing. Extra Days/Extended Hours will be refused if the classroom is full. Unscheduled extended time will be charged as a "Late Pick Up" (see section on late pickups.)

Multiple child discounts do not apply to extended/extra day requests.

Billing: We will bill parents for child care services weekly. Your statement will be emailed out every Tuesday. You will always be paying for the following weeks care. Please make sure the child care office has your correct email address.

Method of Payment: In order to ensure proper credit to your account, your check should be payable to "Learning Tree" and include your child's name in the memo section.

Check, Visa & MasterCard payments are accepted. We do not accept American Express or Discover Card.

Cash payments are accepted - make sure that you receive a receipt in case of error.

A \$50 handling charge will be added for the processing of any check returned by your bank. If ONE check is returned by your bank for any reason, Learning Tree will no longer accept checks from you. Payments will then need to be made by cash, cashier's check or credit card.

Child Care Fees: Learning Tree is an organization that operates primarily on the tuition fees from each child. Although we always keep a child's best interest in mind, Learning Tree is in jeopardy when tuition payments are delinquent.

Every Tuesday, you will receive an invoice emailed to you at the email address you put on your Reservation Form. The invoice will reflect charges for the upcoming week. Payment must be made by closing on the Friday prior to the billed week. Each invoice will reflect payments due, and any past due balance. A past due balance will be assessed a 5% late payment charge on any payment not made by noon on the 1st day of the scheduled week. Any outstanding balance equal to two weeks of your child's tuition will result in disenrollment. The Director may consider special payment arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

It must be understood that to hold your child's space, payment must be paid whether your child attends or not. Payment is based on Reserved Time, not attendance.

If payment is not received, your child care spot will be given to someone on our waiting list, and your unpaid balance will be sent to collections.

If Learning Tree must close the center due to inclement winter weather or temperatures, parents will be responsible for the first 10 cancelled school days per year. (January - December) Please note that these days may not occur consecutively, but rather throughout the winter months. After the first 10 cancelled days, tuition will not be charged if it is necessary to close due to winter weather.

Extended Illness & Absences: If your child must be absent Extended absences due to illness, familial situations or otherwise will still incur weekly tuition fees. Parents will continue to be responsible for all incurred tuition during this time.

If your child must be absent due a Covid-19 exposure, and the center/classroom needs to close, you will incur regular tuition fees for the first 10 days absence per calendar year (January - December).

If a child is unvaccinated or under vaccinated during an outbreak of a vaccinated preventable illness and has to be absent for the mandatory number of days for that illness according to the Minnesota Department of Health, parents are still responsible for all tuition that is due during their child's absence.

County Copays: County Copays are due bi weekly. You may not receive a weekly invoice, but your copays will fall under the same policies as are found under "Child Care Fees".

Holiday Schedule: Tuition payment will be required for the following observed holidays. A two-week written notice will not be accepted for these holidays.

New Years Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Labor Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Years Eve.

Child Care Rates: Please see Center Director for current rates.

Multiple Child Discount: Learning Tree provides parents with more than one child enrolled a multiple child discount. This is a 10% discount taken off the tuition of the oldest child. For families with 3 or more children, the 10% discount is taken off of the entire bill. This discount does not apply to extra hours or late fees.

Military Discount: Learning Tree provides parents who have served in the US Military and can provide proof of service such as letter of service or military ID, a 10% discount off of Child Care Fees. This discount applies to reserved hours

only and will not be applied towards extra time used. You are not allowed to use both the Multiple Child Discount and Military Discount together.

Registration Fee: A \$70 non-refundable registration fee is charged at the beginning of a child's enrollment. This charge is per child and is a one-time fee with continued enrollment. If you are not registered at Learning Tree for 1 year, you will be required to pay the registration fee again.

Delayed Care For Current Registration: Learning Tree will occasionally receive requests for Child Care to be reserved for a later start date. (ie; child isn't born yet, child has another care option at the moment, etc..)

To Register your child to start at a date other than within two weeks, you would fill out a Reservation Form as well as our Two Week Hold Form. Families are required to pay the \$65 Registration Fee AND two weeks of scheduled care. If you show up as scheduled, the Two Weeks will be applied to your first two weeks of care. Failure to show up will result in the Two Week payment being applied as your two week notice and will not be returned. This registration is good for a 9 month period of time, as indicated on your registration form. After that time, your registration will expire and you will lose your deposit.

Tax Information: Letters/Statements for income tax purposes will be available to each family by the end of January on Brightwheel.

Notification of Withdrawal: If you have been accepted into our program and choose to withdraw BEFORE your schedule start date, you MUST notify the director the Friday before the first day scheduled. If you miss this deadline, you will be billed for two weeks of child care.

If you completely withdraw from our program anytime or decide to decrease your child's schedule, a two-week written notice is required. You will be charged for two week of care whether or not your child attends.

Late Pick Up Policy (during regular business hours): The hours that you have reserved for child care are the hours in which your child should be in attendance at the center. The staff is scheduled according to the children's schedules throughout the day. Dropping your child off before your scheduled time or picking up later can significantly disrupt our group size and our child/teacher ratio. **There is no Grace Period!**

Late fees will be applied to anyone exceeding their scheduled hours. Anytime you are late picking up your child or early dropping off without prior approval from the

director, a \$5 per 10 minute fee will be charged. These fees are in addition to your regular tuition! It is important that when scheduling care, you allow adequate time to drop off and pick up your child.

If a child is not picked up by closing time, and we are unable to contact the parents or someone you designated as an emergency pick-up person, we will contact the police.

All late fees need to be paid in full before your child care return to Learning Tree.

Late Pick Up Policy (after regular business hours): Any parent or guardian who has not picked up their child by closing will be considered late. There is No Grace Period! The fee charged for late pick up is as follows - 1 - 15 minutes late: \$15 16 minutes and later: \$1 per minute, in addition to the above charge.

This fee will double after the third late pick up.

Schedule Changes: You may not substitute your reserved hours for different hours once a schedule has been set. Although you may not switch your child care hours on any given day, you do have the option of requesting extra child care hours, IF SPACE IS AVAILABLE.

A request for a permanent schedule change may be made at any time. If space is available, we will add the extra hours you need to your permanent schedule. Any decrease in hours will require a two-week written notice.

Notification of Absences: We appreciate an email or telephone call when children will be absent from the center so that we can better plan for the daily program. If a child is absent due to illness, we need to be informed of this so we can inform other families, if necessary.

If your child is absent for five days without notification and the parent cannot be reached, the child may be dropped from the program.

Health and Safety

Immunizations and Health Care Summary: The State of Minnesota requires all children to have a complete immunization record and a Health Care Summary on file before your child's first day.

Reexamination: A new Health Care Summary is required for children already admitted to the program. An updated report of physical examination signed by your child's source of health care is required at least annually for children less than 16 months. When an infant is moving up to the Toddler Room we will need a new physical before they turn 16 months old. Toddlers moving up to Preschool will need a new physical before they reach the age of 3.

Parents also have a responsibility to inform the center when their child has, or develops, any special medical condition, needs, or allergies so that we can provide for appropriated care and support. Dietary modification because of special dietary needs shall be made under the direction of a trained health care provider. Written permission from the child's parents and the child's health care provider is required.

Illness: Learning Tree follows the State of Minnesota guidelines for Exclusion from Childcare for children with a communicable disease.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will notify you of your child's symptoms and that your child needs to be picked up. We will provide your child with a quiet place to rest while they wait for you. If we cannot reach you, we will notify your emergency contacts. If your child receives a diagnosed illness, you are required to notify the center office so that we can post information about the illness in your child's classroom. This posting does not include any names of children, parents or any other identifying information and is only provided to help other parents know what symptoms to watch for in their own children. Enclosed in your registration folder is a partial list of common illnesses that require children to be excluded from care for a period of time based on the illness. Please review this form carefully. Your child may return according to the time period listed on the Exclusion Policy Form or sooner if you provide a doctor's note stating that your child is not contagious without fever. When returning to school, make sure you bring the note that was given to you when your child was sent home, filled out by your child's clinic.

Non-prescriptive medications, such as acetaminophen, cough medicine, cough drops, orajel or aspirin are not administered at the center. We administer only prescriptive medications under the following conditions:

- A signed and dated Medication Authorization Form completed by the parent/guardian is on file
- The medication is in the original container and labeled with the child's name, directions for dosage, date and physicians name.

In the event of a medical emergency requiring immediate medical attention, we will call to request police or ambulance service. We will then call the parent/guardian or the emergency contact person if the parent cannot be reached. The child will be transported to the health care facility listed on his/her enrollment form. If a child is transported to a medical facility, a staff member will accompany him/her.

Please keep in mind that children cannot be given fever reducers such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen for any reason just prior to attending Learning Tree.

Although we try our best to prevent all children from becoming sick, it is not uncommon for children in child care to share illnesses, especially infants and toddlers. The center is for well children. Ill children have a difficult time functioning because they do not have the energy to cope with other children and the demands of a busy schedule. We realize that parents don't want to miss classes or work, but it is important for a child to stay home, rest and get well if illness occurs. Your child's health is assessed up arrival, but if symptoms of illness appear during the day, parents are contacted to pick up the sick child.

TO HELP ALLEVIATE THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS, ALL CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO WASH HANDS UPON ARRIVAL AT THE CENTER AND AT OTHER TIMES THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

Children Sent Home For Illness: Children sent home from Learning Tree due to illness may not return the following day. A child who is feeling ill needs to be in a quiet place where he/she can rest and have lots of attention and tender loving care.

Children Returning After Illness: Children may return to school based on the Exclusion Chart. Children returning with any of the previous symptoms or illness will be excluded from Learning Tree immediately. The decision is at the discretion of the child care staff.

When your child is ready to return and medication is required, a "Medication Authorization" form must be signed by the parent and given to your child's teacher.

Supervision of Children at Learning Tree:

Parents are responsible for the safety and well being of their children any time in which you are together at the center, but LTDC staff will step in if we feel a child is exhibiting an unsafe practice. Please do not allow your child to wander or run off anywhere in the center without you.

When entering and exiting the center, your child must remain with you at all times. They should not run ahead to their classroom or run out the main door without you - this is teaching them a very unsafe practice.

If you need to speak with your child's teacher at pick up, please keep your child in his/her classroom. Each room has items that are age specific. Our Preschool Room for example has many smaller items that are not appropriate for any child under Preschool Age.

We also request that you restrict your children from climbing on furniture (or anything that is not intended for climbing). We set rules and limits to maintain expectations for children's behavior while they are under our supervision, so we expect the same from parents when under your supervision.

Insurance: Learning Tree carries general liability insurance for all registered children while they are in the center.

Nutrition:

Morning Snack: 9:00 for Toddlers & Preschoolers, 9:00 for Infants

Learning Tree provides breakfast/morning snack for all children.

Lunch: 11:30 for Infants, 12:15 for Toddlers & Preschool

If your child is in the center during the above lunch times, please pack a nutritionally balanced lunch.

Lunch is important for children. It provides vital nutrition which replenishes their energy and helps them through their busy day. We are required by the State of MN Licensing Division and NAEYC standards to supplement your child's lunch with whatever food groups may be missing. All lunches should contain a grain, protein, fruit and/or vegetable and dairy.

All foods must be prepared appropriately for the child to eat. The City of Bloomington Health Department will not allow us to cut any foods, or open oranges/ clementines/bananas etc... They classify this as food prep.

Snack: 3:00 for all children

Learning Tree provides snack for all children.

Learning Tree provides dairy milk at all meals. Whole milk is given to the Infants 12 months and older & Toddlers, 1% is given to all children over age 2.

Emergency Procedures

Blizzards / Snow Emergencies: In the event of a blizzard, parents will be notified of program closing by listening to Kare11 TV and/or via the Remind app.. In the event that blizzards or snow emergencies would necessitate closing the program during the day, the staff will call parents to inform them of the closing. If parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called. Food and bedding will be available if an emergency overnight stay is necessary. At least one staff member will remain until all the children have been picked up.

Tornado Drills: Tornado drills will be held once a month in each classroom from April to September, and documented.

Tornados and Severe Thunderstorms: When weather conditions indicate the possibility of a tornado, listen to the radio for official watches and warnings. All staff and children go or remain indoors when under a watch or warning. If sirens are heard or a tornado/severe thunderstorm warning is announced, all staff and children will proceed to the tornado shelter. This is located in the women's bathroom or the hallway directly outside of the bathroom.

A battery operated portable radio, flashlights, first aid kit and activity items for children and a blanket will be taken to the shelter. These items are located in each classroom.

Fire Drills: Monthly fire drills will be held at varying times and days to all encounters with a variety of activities. All staff and children participate in monthly fire drills. A report of this drill will be documented.

Actual Fire: First adult at the scene closes off fire area, pulls the fire alarm and pick up the attendance list. Other adults get the children to safety outside of the building by use of either the primary or secondary fire exits posted in each room. A count of children will be made when all are outdoors. The outside meeting place is in the playground area. No one will return to the building until the Fire Department Officials have given approval.

Lockdown Drills: In addition to our monthly fire drill, we will be conducting disaster drills quarterly, which will include lock down drills. Parents will be notified of any lock down drills on the Remind app. During our lock down drills the door will be locked and no one will be able to enter or leave during that time (usually no more than 20 minutes).

Missing Child: It is always Learning Tree's strict policy that no child is ever left alone. During transitions, a staff person will always leave the room first as a leader, and another staff person will be the last one out of the room to assure that all children follow.

If a child cannot be found after a thorough search of the center, we will notify the police department and the child's parents. The search for the missing child last no longer than 5 minutes before the authorities and parents are contacted.

Persons Authorized To Pick Up: Children will be released from the center ONLY to authorized persons whose names appear on the Enrollment Data Form you fill out at registration (who we would contact - not allowed to just come into the center and take child), or on the Child Release Form which needs to be filled out by the parent on the specific day in which someone else is picking up your child. In addition, anyone who is picking up a child and is unfamiliar to a staff member must show identification before the child can be released. Anyone who does not provide identification will be turned away.

PLEASE DO NOT GIVE ANYONE ELSE YOUR KEY FOB!!

Children will not be released to a person who is incapacitated or suspected of abuse. Staff are not expected to jeopardize their own safety, or the safety of children in their care. If staff is threatened and/or forced to give up the child, the parent or emergency contact person, or if necessary 911 will be called. If the person who is incapacitated or suspected of abuse is the parent, child protection will be called.

General Safety Practices:

- Teachers have completed background studies on site
- All staff have completed SUID Training
- All teachers have completed First Aid & CPR Training as well as SUID (Sudden Unexpected Infant Death) and AHT (Abusive Head Trauma)
- All staff are mandated to report any suspicion of Child Abuse/Neglect
- Children are supervised at all times and ratios maintained
- Parent Emergency information on file in children's files and on an emergency directory
- Authorized Pick Up information is on file and in emergency directory

- If we are not familiar with the authorized pick up person we will ask to see ID and will match the persons ID with the emergency directory information provided by the parent
- Each room has a First Aid Kit
- Emergency numbers are posted in each classroom
- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each classroom
- Emergency Drills are practiced monthly with the children
- Teachers spread out on the playground to ensure adequate and appropriate supervision
- Medication box is out of children's reach
- Medications administered only with written permission of parents
- Cleaning supplies are out of children's reach
- Teachers fill out documentation for accidents, incidents and health related incidents. Parents are given copies of accident forms
- Teachers follow universal precautions for blood-related accidents and incidents
- Choke tubes are available to test if toys are too small
- Latex-free gloves are available in rooms for emergencies
- Toys are checked frequently and broken toys are discarded
- Emergency numbers and first aid kits are included in backpacks for trips outside of the center
- Daily information sheets keep parents and staff updated and informed regarding the Infants - Toddlers health, mood etc.... (these sheets are available in the preschool room - just ask)
- No small toys are accessible to infants and toddlers
- Health and Safety information is incorporated into the curriculum and taught to the children on a regular basis

Parents Responsibilities for Safety:

- Keep current on children's immunizations and well baby/child check ups
- Keep sick children at home until 24 hours after the disappearance of all symptoms, including the disappearance of fever, with the absence of fever reducing medication
- Tell your child's teacher in your child has a communicable disease
- Fill out the necessary forms to allow your child's teacher to administer medications
- Take home medications that we no longer administer
- In your child will not be coming to Learning Tree for sickness or other reasons, please call or email your child's teacher
- Teach your child good health practices at home (wiping nose with tissues, brushing teeth after meals, flushing the toilet, washing hands frequently, cleaning up after self, etc...) It helps if we are consistent with health practices at home and school
- Keep your locating information current with the office. State law requires that you have a minimum of 2 different people to contact in an emergency
- Always tell the teachers if someone other than the parent will be picking up your child
- Bring your child to Learning Tree in the appropriate car safety restraints. If we notice that your child is not properly restrained, don't be offended if we say something to you about it
- Never leave your child in the car unattended
- Do not let your child run ahead of you in the parking lot. Teach them to stay close for safety purposes
- Please do not "race" with your children in the hall. Do not let them run ahead of you in the hallways
- Do not ask your child to meet you inside or allow your child to linger in his or her classroom while you go to pick up another child in a different room. When we see

you arrive, we transfer responsibility for keeping your child supervised back to you

- Keep teacher informed about your child's health, mood, eating habits, family situations or anything that might affect your child's behavior at school

Reporting Policy For Programs Providing Services To Children:

Who should report Child Abuse and Neglect?

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency

Where to Report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911
 - All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at 651.431.6600
 - Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency or local law enforcement
 - If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at 651.431.6500.

What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and is available for viewing in the child care center office
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known) and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a

licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident

- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays

Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

Retaliation Prohibited An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Internal Review When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- Related policies and procedures were followed
- The policies and procedures were adequate
- There is a need for additional staff training
- The reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- There is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care

Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed The internal review will be completed by Barb Watson, Owner. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, Andrea Wilson, Director will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Documentation of the Internal Review The facility must document completion of the internal review and provide documentation of the review to the commissioner upon the commissioner's request.

Corrective Action Plan Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

Staff Training The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor the implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

The mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the child care program and must be made available upon request.

General Operating Policies & Procedures

Sign In and Out: Children are to be brought directly to their Teacher, regardless of their location!! If your child's class is not in the center, you need to find them. (You are not able to leave your child with another class.) We follow the class schedule given to you. Your child's class may be outside on the playground or walking around the neighborhood. If they are planning on leaving the center at any time other than the scheduled "Outside Time", it will be noted on the parent's newsletter or posted on the parent board. It is very important that you look in your child's mailbox daily to find this information. Please record your arrival and departure times daily in the Sign In/Out pages. This is very important in case of an emergency.

All parents, guardians and children need to wash their hands before they go into the classroom. This includes all children, including Infants.

Clothing: Clothing that children wear to school should be comfortable, easy to put on and remove, easy to care for and labeled with your child's name. Please send your child in play clothes. We offer art activities, water, sand and outdoor play so children need to wear clothing that allows them to move freely and get dirty. Teachers cannot and will not be responsible for keeping your child's "good clothes" clean throughout a busy day in a child care center.

During cooler weather, it is necessary for each child to dress appropriately. Children will go outside daily unless it is raining or the wind chill/temperature is below 0 degrees. Boots, water proof mittens, a heavy jacket, snow pants and a hat will be needed to winter play. (If you fail to provide adequate clothing for outside play, we will contact you to either pick up your child, or play with him/her inside) Gym shoes (instead of sandals) are appropriate for the summer.

All clothing, bags, diapers and belongings must be labeled with your child's full name!

Learning Tree discourages clothing and toys that promote violent behavior.

Outdoor Play: We believe that children learn best through play and hands on experiences. We also believe that the outdoors is an extension of the indoor classroom. We typically go outside twice a day. Toys, materials and activities are also available outside to enhance the children's play experience. If your child is not well enough to play outdoors, he or she is not well enough to attend Learning Tree.

Outdoor Temperature Policy: Outdoor play is an important part of our daily curriculum, as weather permits. It is important for parents to provide the appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions. (jacket, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc...) Learning Tree has a few extra hats and mittens, but not enough for everyone.

The staff members use the following guidelines when determining whether to go outside:

Winter:

- If temperatures/wind chill fall below 0 degrees F (30F for infants), staff will keep children indoors
- Children spend a shorter amount of time outside in the cold temperatures and are monitored closely. Please make sure that your children are dressed appropriately for outdoor play

Summer:

- If temperatures/heat index approach 95 degrees F (90F for infants) staff will keep children indoors. Children often participate in water play activities outside in shady areas of the playground
- Children are also encouraged to get plenty of drinks to replenish body fluids. We ask that you send a bottle/container for water during the summer months. Parents are encouraged to provide sun screen.

All children who are well enough to attend Learning Tree will be taken outdoors for play. Studies have been consistent that children do not have lowered resistance to colds or other infections because of outdoor play, but are much healthier and have stronger resistance to illness with play out-of-doors. Parents **MAY NOT** request for their child to stay indoors while the rest of the group is outside.

While we understand that as parents, you may have different opinions on when it is okay/not okay to go outside. We follow the State Guidelines provided to us by our Health Nurse.

Behavior Guidance: Guidance techniques are designed and carried out to help the individual child develop self-control and to assume responsibility for his or her actions. The rules are simple and understandable and redirection, along with an explanation, is a common technique.

No child will be punished by corporal punishment or verbal abuse. Please keep in mind, this policy also applies to parents. Children **MAY NOT** be spanked or threatened to be spanked at the child care center.

The following behaviors are prohibited (by ALL persons) in all child care settings:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear
- Abusive or profane language
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing or isolating a child If a parent has concern about another child's behavior, we ask that you discuss your concern with the appropriate head teacher or director. Under NO circumstances will you be allowed to approach the child in an effort to deal with the situation yourself. We consider this method to be completely inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

Please remember that young children need to experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to share and cooperate with others is a very difficult process for young children, and aggressive behavior will occur. Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it does take time for a child to learn a more acceptable way of dealing with his/her anger and frustration (using appropriate words to express feelings)

The following procedures will be followed when addressing persistent unacceptable behavior that requires increased staff guidance and time:

- Staff observe and record child's behavior and staff response
- Develop a Behavior Modification Plan to address a child's behavior in consultation with a child's parents, other staff and professionals when needed. The plan will set short and long term goals. Parents must be actively involved in seeking at participating in the Behavior Modification Plan. If the inappropriate behavior continues and parents are not involved in seeking a solution, the child's care may be terminated.

The above procedure should be followed for children who are separated from the group 5 or more times in one week or eight or more times in two weeks or when the safety of children and staff are involved.

Conflict Resolution: We encourage children at all age levels to solve their own problems. On a daily basis, children are challenged to resolve conflicts with other children and their environment. Depending on the age group, a teacher will intervene at different times to assure safety. By not constantly and prematurely interrupting, adults allow children to work through situations and develop their own solutions. Adults only intervene when guidance is apparently needed. This empowers the child to take care of situations and interactions alone.

Apologies: While learning to socialize, children encounter peer conflicts that sometimes result in hurting another child. Many adult's first reaction is to have the child say "I'm Sorry". A child needs to understand their own feelings and begin empathizing with other children's feelings before using the abstract concept of being sorry in a genuine way. Insisting on an apology teaches a child how to please an adult rather than gaining an understanding for others.

When a conflict arises between non-verbal children, we start the understanding process by modeling appropriate behavior and talking about how the other child feels. As children acquire language, we continue the process by helping the children with the words they need to express their feelings. The teacher facilitates the process by suggesting ways the aggressive child can help the upset child. For example, a child who has pushed another child on a cement path will be asked to get a wet paper towel or an ice pak to help the injured child. This helps them to make amends. There is a point in cognitive and social-emotional development when a child understands being sorry, and it is then that we encourage apologies to start.

Biting: No behavior elicits as much parental concern as biting because the experience is both frightening and painful for the child involved. Helping a child work through this behavior is a challenge for parents, staff and other children. The center staff always attempt to evaluate causes and develop appropriate solutions. Here are some developmental insights of the problem:

- Biting is a common behavior among toddlers
- Very young children lack the verbal ability to express strong feelings, and when frustrated bit the object of frustration
- We attempt to stop bites before they happen. If a teachers senses anger and sees one child move closer to another with teeth bared, the teacher may intervene saying "You are really mad and want that toy, but I'm not going to let you bite"
- Toddlers often bite to relieve discomfort from teething. As an alternative, teething rings may be offered
- Biting is not a personal issue directed at someone, it's more of a case of the bitten child being at the wrong place at the wrong time

- Young children's egocentric view of the world prevents them from understanding that it hurts others to be bitten
- There is no magic solution, resolution is usually an extensive process
- By preschool, children should no longer be biting, but using verbal communication to express feelings. If biting does occur in preschool, parents meet with teachers to discuss ways to help the child

Suspension and Termination: Learning Tree reserves the right to suspend or terminate a child's care if the child's behavior endangers the safety of the child, other children, staff or property three or more times in three months. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to: hitting aggressively, kicking, head butting, pinching, spitting, throwing objects, inability to participate in planned activities, or demands 1:1 attention because of inappropriate behavior which puts the classroom out of ratio.

WITHIN A THREE MONTH

PERIOD: First Incident:

The parent will be notified and the child will need to leave the center for the remainder of the day.

Second Incident: The parent will be notified and the child will need to leave the center for the remainder of the day and the following 2 days.

Third Incident: The parent will be notified and the child's care will be terminated.

Learning Tree Staff can help as a resource and referral source to agencies in the community. Please talk to us about any concerns and ask us questions. We believe that appropriate behavior leads to success in school and life. We want to support your child and your family toward a successful future!

Sharing Time: The purpose of sharing is to encourage interests in life, to build self-esteem, self-image, self-discovery, awareness, social skills, knowledge and enhance vocabulary. Show and Tell can be fun for children - a part of the person may be shared with others in more than one way.

Staff will decide on scheduled sharing days, and then will let you know through monthly calendars. On their day, each child can bring something to school. During group time, the staff will allow children to play, share and/or talk about what they brought.

Staff recognizes the child's private property. Therefore, no child is forced to allow another child to play with their property. The items are stored in the child's cubby, and are taken home at the end of the day.

Children may bring an item on sharing day, or they may choose to just talk about something, or just watch and listen.

Guns and war-related items are not allowed.

Conferences and Daily Sheets: Conferences will be held twice a year to discuss your child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. Sign up forms will be available in each classroom. If you would like to meet with your child's teacher at any other time, we would be happy to do so.

Parents of Infants and Toddlers will receive a daily sheet letting you know about your child's day. This includes eating, diapering and sleeping patterns, as well as general behavior. Preschool parents will receive daily communication about their child's day through posted lesson plans, group notes, and verbal contact.

Children With Special Needs: It is necessary to have prior approval of the Director before leaving a child with special needs. The Director will determine if the center can meet the needs of your child on an individual basis. Special Needs includes speech delays, behavioral delays, Autism, Developmental Delays, etc...

Photographs: We take many pictures at Learning Tree and upload them to our Facebook "Share Account". This FB Group is restricted so that only staff and currently enrolled parents can view the pictures. We also use some of the pictures we take for advertisement, on our Public Facebook Page, and for use in the classroom. We will never reference your child by name or provide any specific information regarding your child. These pictures will never be sold.

You must sign a consent form for any photographs to be taken of your child before we use them.

Pets: Learning Tree currently does not have any animals.

Birthdays: You are welcome to bring a special snack for your child to share at school on his/her birthday. Any snacks brought in must be store bought and arrive in an unopened package.

Parents can ask the teachers in advance for the number of children who will be in attendance on the day you wish to bring a snack. Please remember we cannot light birthday candles in the center.

Items Brought From Home: Our center maintains a generous supply of materials and equipment for the children to use. Therefore, children are asked to keep toys and other personal items at home. This helps to avoid hurt feelings in an item is lost or broken.

In addition, please do not bring gum, candy or money into the center. These items will be either thrown away or placed in your child's cubby. Please help your child understand these rules.

Visitors: Parents are welcome to visit their child anytime. We do ask however that you keep your child's needs in mind when you visit. Some of our children have a hard time saying goodbye to their parents multiple times in a single day. Visitors authorized to be at the program other than parents of an enrolled child must check in at the office.

Data Privacy: The only persons permitted to see your child's records will be the parent or legal guardian, child care staff working directly with your child, legal representatives and the Community Services Department.

Information will not be given to others without written consent from the parent or legal guardian. It is the policy of this program not to disclose the names of children who may have caused injuries to other children while at the program. This is a safeguard for the data privacy of each family.

We will not verify your child's enrollment/attendance to anyone in person or via the telephone without your consent.

Grievance Procedure: Learning Tree asks that any client with a grievance about the operation of our program present it in writing to within 15 days of the event:

Barb Watson, Owner/Director of Learning Tree Development Center

All information relevant to the grievance will be gathered and any findings reported in writing within 15 days.

Parent Involvement

Home - School Communication: We value our relationship and communication with parents, as we serve as partners in the care of your children. We encourage you to let us know anything that might help us in our work with your child - a move, developmental or medical needs, the birth of a baby, divorce or separation, death in the family, a new pet, etc... All are examples of information that can be helpful to us.

Teachers will share information with you about your child's day on a regular basis. Although we want you to be aware of certain situations and behaviors your child may be exhibiting at the center, we don't expect you to "fix it" or to punish your child. We will handle situations that arise but just want parents to be aware of what we are doing in the classroom as it pertains to your child.

A monthly newsletter is distributed to provide information concerning center curriculum, policies, announcements and general information about young children. Please read these newsletters so you can remain informed about center policies and procedures. Important information about billing and enrollment are also included in newsletters.

To enhance parent-teacher communications, we ask that you refrain from talking on your cell phone while dropping off or picking up your child.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality of information is a very important aspect of our program. Sometimes we encounter situations such as a parent who expresses a concern about another child's behavior. This typically happens during parent conferences. Although we understand your concern for the welfare of your child, we cannot discuss detailed information about other children and families with you. Please keep in mind that children develop at very different rates and it's not realistic to expect all children to "behave" the way you expect them to. What is disturbing to one parent is not as upsetting to another. As professional staff, we have to decide what behavior is unacceptable and beyond what is considered typical for that age. Please know that we are always working with individual children and families but we cannot disclose this information to you. Parents need to be assured that we won't discuss their child's development or progress with others so this applies to your child as well.

Parent Conferences: Parents are invited to speak with classroom teachers or a director at any time concerning center matters or your child's development. It is best to talk directly to your child's teacher if you have concerns regarding your child or their classroom, and to the director if you have concerns about a staff member, center policy or procedure.

We strongly encourage all parents to sign up for a conference at the designated time during fall and spring semesters.

Parent Concerns: As a child care center we are in a community of children, parents and staff all interacting and sharing our lives together. In a community, people work closely together and hopefully interactions are positive, helpful, kind and understanding. Yet it is to be expected that from time to time, people experience some conflict, concerns and difficulties.

We recognize that parenting is one of the most difficult, intense and rewarding experiences in your life. We want you to share your thoughts, hopes and dreams for your child. You want what is best for your child and we know it is your job to advocate and protect your child.

We, as a staff, may make mistakes, create misunderstandings, and occasionally misinterpret shared information. When these mistakes occur, we want for you to tell us. As a staff, it is our goal to offer your family the best child care services possible. In order to meet our goal, we need your input, your suggestions, your questions and concerns.

When you have a concern, please remember -

- Teachers want the parents to feel very satisfied with the care their child is receiving
- Talk to the teachers directly whenever possible. If you feel comfortable, ask your child's teacher first about any concern. Teachers prefer you talk with them directly, but understand if you would prefer talking with the director
- Be assured that teachers do not hold a grudge against your child or "take it out" on your child after you have expressed a concern. We would not hire anyone at the center that would react in such an inappropriate manner. Actually, after expressing a concern, your child's teacher will be more conscientious about your issue and try to improve
- Sometimes we cannot make changes you may request due to other restrictions, but we always want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.

Parent Visits: Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time, but keep in mind it may be difficult for a child to cope with separating from a parent for a second time during the day. Children typically assume they will be picked up from the center anytime they see their parent. It is difficult for them to understand that although you are leaving, they are expected to stay.

Special talents or interests you might wish to share are always welcome. Please talk to your child's teacher about this.

