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Family Handbook

2024-2025

**20010 Chartown Dr.**

**Cornelius, NC 28031**

**PH: 704.312.1055**

**www.littlelifeacademy.org**

Table of Contents

[Vision and Mission 3](#_Toc171588161)

[Services 3](#_Toc171588162)

[Connect with Us 3](#_Toc171588163)

[Center Management 3](#_Toc171588164)

[Staff 3](#_Toc171588165)

[Non-discrimination 4](#_Toc171588166)

[Operational Hours: 4](#_Toc171588167)

[Ages Served / Enrolling Your Child 4](#_Toc171588168)

[Tuition and Fees 6](#_Toc171588169)

[Holidays Observed 7](#_Toc171588170)

[Closures Due to Inclement Weather 8](#_Toc171588171)

[Withdrawing Your Child 8](#_Toc171588172)

[FOOD & NUTRITION 8](#_Toc171588173)

[Contagious Diseases and Health Care Provider Clearance 8](#_Toc171588174)

[Safety and Security 10](#_Toc171588175)

[Arrival and Departure Procedures 11](#_Toc171588176)

[Confidentiality and Children’s Records 11](#_Toc171588177)

[Mandated Reporting Requirements 12](#_Toc171588178)

[Emergency Situations and Evacuation Plans 12](#_Toc171588179)

[Child Accidents 12](#_Toc171588180)

[Custody and Visitation 12](#_Toc171588181)

[Media Release 12](#_Toc171588182)

[Weapons and Violence 13](#_Toc171588183)

[Parent Behavior 13](#_Toc171588184)

[Drug-Free and Smoke-Free Environment 13](#_Toc171588185)

[Fenced Area 13](#_Toc171588186)

[Celebrations and Birthdays 14](#_Toc171588187)

[Parent Participation 14](#_Toc171588188)

[Educational Emphasis 15](#_Toc171588189)

[Daily Schedule 16](#_Toc171588190)

[Discipline/Guidance Policy Policy Adopted 08/2018 17](#_Toc171588191)

[Biting Policy 17](#_Toc171588192)

[When Children Need More 20](#_Toc171588193)

[Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma 20](#_Toc171588194)

[Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rule for Child Care Centers 23](#_Toc171588195)

# Vision and Mission

Little LIFE Academy is a full-time, year-round, state-licensed child care facility that provides excellence in education along with a Christian foundation.  LLA emphasizes *Making Great Readers* and nurtures both school readiness and a love for God and His Word.  Our vision is to lead each child to pursue at all costs a passionate God-centered life.

# Services

LLA provides age-appropriate activities and curriculum to help prepare the children enrolled to make positive and lasting impacts on their world.  Educationally, there is an emphasis on school readiness and on *Making Great Readers*.  Spiritually, the emphasis is on laying a solid and strong biblical foundation for life.  The children are also provided with opportunities to serve and help others both locally and worldwide through various mission activities.  All activities and curriculum are conducted on-site; children will not be transported off-site.

Snacks and lunches for the children are provided by their parents and sent to the Academy each day.

For any questions or concerns, please contact Sonya Scott Jones, Director at 704-312-1055 or by e-mail at sjones@lifecharlotte.com

# Connect with Us

**Telephone:  704-312-1055**

**Facebook:  Little LIFE Academy**

**Website:  www.littlelifeacademy.org**

**Email:** [sjones@lifecharlotte.com](mailto:sjones@lifecharlotte.com) / khobbs@lifecharlotte.com

# Center Management

Ms. Sonya Scott Jones Director

Ms. Kim Hobbs Assistant Director

# Staff

As a staff, we thank you for entrusting your children to us, and we want you to know without any doubt that we take that privilege seriously. We consider it an honor and a blessing from God, and we are excited to have your family as part of Little LIFE Academy.

The desire of our hearts is to serve the Lord through serving the children and families of LLA, and we strive to do so with the utmost excellence. Please do not ever hesitate to let us know how we may support and pray for your family.

# Non-discrimination

Little LIFE Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.  It does not discriminate based on race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

# Operational Hours:

Little Life Academy hours of operation are 7:00am to 6:30pm Monday through Friday. We are open year-round except for closure dates for holiday, staff training, etc. Closure dates are provided to families each school year. We do not offer a part-time option; we are fulltime only. No before or after school care is provided.

# Ages Served / Enrolling Your Child

LLA seeks to enroll children of all races and cultures without discrimination and accepts children for the following classes:

* 2-year-olds (Lambs)
* 3-year-olds (Bears) – must be potty trained
* Pre-K, 4-year-olds (Lions)
* Transitional Kindergarten, 5-year-olds (Tigers)

We welcome inquiries and tours by appointment. The Director or Assistant Director will help with the entire application process.  Parents must tour the preschool before registration to determine if Little Life Academy is a good fit for the child and the family. Student/teacher ratios in our age groups are set in compliance with state regulations.  If there is space for a child, the enrollment process may continue with the completion of appropriate paperwork and payment of the registration fee.  If there is not space, the child may be placed on a waiting list.

**Enrollment Requirements**

* Children must provide a current medical completed by a doctor
* Immunizations must be kept up-to-date and on file as required by N.C. law.
* Parents are to include emergency contact information on their child’s application form.  This information indicates how to reach parents and/or other responsible adults in case of an emergency.  It is the parent’s responsibility to keep this information current.

**What to Bring**

Parents provide the following items for their enrolled children:

* a healthy lunch daily (with name and date) in a double-walled lunchbox (see examples)
* a.m. snack (with name and date)
* p.m. snack (with name and date)
  + a water bottle (with name and date)
* a small blanket for quiet time (optional: a small pillow/stuffed animal)
* a change of clothing to be kept in their cubby
* jacket or coat (children go outside year-round)
* diapers/pull-ups & wipes (in the 2’s)

**Examples of double-walled lunchboxes and containers:**

A pink container with food in it

Description automatically generated A collage of food in a container

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A screenshot of a product

Description automatically generatedA green lunch box with food in it

Description automatically generatedA group of blue containers

Description automatically generatedA blue thermos container with a spoon

Description automatically generated

**Lunch and snack ideas: NO CANDY ALLOWED**

  A plate of food on a table

Description automatically generated

# Easy Lunch Box Ideas for Kids (Nut-Free) 15 Toddler Lunch Ideas (for Daycare ... Toddler School Lunch - Weelicious

A group of food in a wooden bowl

Description automatically generated A blue lunch box with sandwiches and snacks

Description automatically generated A plate of food with a spoon

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# Tuition and Fees

**Yearly Registration Fee:** $125 ($75 sibling)

May be paid by

* cash
* check (made out to LIFE Fellowship)
* online at [www.myprocare.com](http://www.myprocare.com) (current families only) using the email we have on file for you.
* online at <http://www.lifecharlotte.com/> Click the give icon in the top right corner and select “Little Life Registration” from the drop-down menu.

**Weekly Tuition:** $280 ($252 sibling)

Paid weekly through automatic draft

Payments are made concurrent with week of care.

**Vacation:** Our fiscal year runs from August through July.  If at least one week’s notice is given, each family may take one week (5 days) vacation time per fiscal year without being charged tuition for the week.  Any vacation weeks over the first week will be charged at regular tuition rate.

**Late Payment Fee:** $20 each week that tuition is not paid by Tuesday of current week

**Returned Payment Fee:** $35

**Late Pick-Up Fee:** $1/minute starting at 6:30 p.m.

Our tuition is figured on a 52-week year running from August through July, with one week of that time being allowed for vacation, as stated above.  Full tuition is due each week regardless of attendance, illness, closure days, or holidays.  If a family wishes to withdraw a child before the school year is complete, a written notice of withdrawal stating the date and reasons for leaving must be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the withdrawal.

# Holidays Observed

The center’s holiday schedule is set and posted annually, but because holidays vary, Admin will distribute and post on the Parent Information Board the list of holiday closings specific to the current calendar year. Little Life Academy is closed on the holidays listed below (or the closest weekday, if it falls on a weekend):

**New Year’s Day**

**February Teacher Work Day / Professional Development**

**Good Friday**

**Easter Monday**

**Memorial Day**

**June teacher work day / professional development**

**Juneteenth**

**Fourth of July**

**August teacher work days (2 days)**

**Labor Day**

**Thanksgiving closed Wednesday, Thursday, Friday**

**Five days at Christmas**

Tuition is the same every week throughout the year – there are no adjustments made for days that we are closed.

# Closures Due to Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, we will post any closures or changes to our regular operating hours in the parent engagement app, by e-mail or text, and on the Little LIFE Academy Facebook page. All decisions regarding closing or opening will be made considering conditions in our area; safety will be our primary concern.

# Withdrawing Your Child

If you need to withdraw your child for any reason, we require a two week written notice submitted to Admin. These two weeks allow us to notify a family from our waiting list that a spot is coming available and to fill the spot. If you withdraw your child without providing a two-week notice, you are still required to pay tuition for those 2 weeks.

# FOOD & NUTRITION

Parents provide snacks and lunch and a water bottle for their child each day. Please note:  We do not heat lunches.  If you wish to send a hot lunch for your child or have lunch that must remain cold, please do so in a thermos or thermal container. For morning or afternoon snack items that must remain cold, please hand those to your child’s teacher to be kept in the mini fridge in the classroom until snack time. The following must be labeled with your child’s first and last name and the date: lunchbox, morning snack, afternoon snack, water bottle. For your convenience, each classroom has labeling items on the cubbies for your use (blue tape, sharpies).

Please share your child’s food allergies/sensitivities upon enrollment or as you become aware.  Children’s special diets or food allergies are posted in each classroom.  Food required by special diets must be provided by parents.

If a special diet is prescribed by a health care professional, a statement signed by the professional shall be on file at LLA and written instructions provided by the parent, health care professional, or a registered dietician.  If the diet is not prescribed by a health care professional, written instructions from the parent must be on file at LLA.  LLA staff members follow the emergency treatment plan for any child who has an allergic reaction.

As you consider enrolling your child at LLA, please note that we are **NOT a nut-free center**.  With all the varying groups that use our facilities, being nut-free is not an option for us.  Foods containing nuts are allowed at LLA.

# Contagious Diseases and Health Care Provider Clearance

We value your child’s health and recognize that preventing the spread of infectious diseases is a very important part of quality childcare. We strive to monitor the health and well-being of all children in our care. If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, please contact LLA so that other parents may be notified. We will keep you informed of any instances of contagious diseases affecting children who may have had direct exposure at the center and will immediately report such diseases to the local health authorities where required by law. Written health care provider clearance is required where noted in the table below; additionally, we may require provider clearance for other illnesses at our discretion. There may be occasions that your pediatrician has cleared your child to return, but Admin requires a longer exclusion period.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Illness | Criteria for return to center |
| Abdominal Pain which is persistent and continues for two or more hours | When symptoms are no longer present |
| Chicken Pox/Varicella | When all sores have dried and crusted, usually after six days |
| Conjunctivitis (eye discharge) or pink eye | Exclude until 24 hours after initial treatment |
| Coronavirus (COVID-19) | Health Care Provider clearance required, and exclusion will be according to the current guidelines for child care centers |
| Coughing (severe) including Croup | When symptoms are no longer present |
| Diarrhea with causes unknown | Until diarrhea is no longer present |
| E-Coli | Health Care Provider and Public Health Department clearance required |
| Fever ≥100.4◦F | 24 hours after fever is no longer present without the use of fever-reducing medications |
| Fifth Disease (Human Parvovirus) accompanied by fever or behavior change or the child has an underlying condition | 24 hours after fever is no longer present without the use of fever-reducing medications |
| Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease (Coxsackievirus) accompanied by mouth ulcers or blisters | When the child does not have exposed open sores |
| Head Lice/Nits or other infestation | Exclude until completion of treatment |
| Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C | Health Care Provider clearance required |
| Herpes Simplex accompanied by mouth ulcers or blisters and no control of drooling or fever or behavior change | When the child has stopped drooling and does not have exposed open sores |
| Impetigo | When 24 hours have passed since antibiotics were started; if the sores can be kept clean and dry and if they can be completely covered |
| Influenza/Flu (Including H1N1 and H5N1) accompanied with fever | Child’s fever must be resolved for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications |
| Measles | Health Department clearance required |
| Meningitis (bacterial or Viral) | Health Department clearance required |
| MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) | Health Care Provider clearance required |
| Mumps | Health Department clearance required |
| Pertussis (whooping cough) | Health Department clearance required |
| Pneumonia | When symptoms are no longer present |
| Ringworm (Tinea) | After treatment has been started and area must remain covered |
| Roseola (Human Heroes virus 6) accompanied by fever | 24 hours after fever is no longer present without the use of fever-reducing medications |
| Rubella | Health Care Provider clearance required |
| Salmonella | Health Care Provider clearance required |
| Scabies | 24 hours after treatment has been started |
| Strep Throat or other streptococcal infection | 12 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and when fever is no longer present |
| Vomiting | 24 hours after vomiting is no longer present |

Parents must complete authorization forms before a child may be given any topical ointments or medication, prescription or non-prescription.  All medication must be in the original, labeled container.  Prescription medications will not be given unless the child’s name is on the prescription.

# Safety and Security

Upon enrollment, each family is issued 2 key fobs for entering the preschool. There is a $25 fee to issue a replacement fob or if fobs are not turned in when you withdraw your child.

Parents must complete an emergency contact list upon enrollment, which must include at least 2 people besides the parents. This authorizes specific individuals to pick your child up in case of an emergency. You are responsible for maintaining accurate, complete and current information.

Written authorization must be turned in to administration prior to your child’s release to anyone not on the authorized pick-up list. For the safety of your child, telephone requests are not permitted. Please also inform everyone on the authorized pick-up list that they will need to bring a photo ID to verify their identity. Your child will not be released to anyone under the age of 18, including siblings.

For the safety and protection of the children, we have security cameras monitoring the playgrounds, classrooms, perimeter, parking lot, hallways and common areas in our preschool.

# Arrival and Departure Procedures

* Enter LLA through the KidLIFE entrance doors on the left side of the building.  Enter your pin or scan the QR code at the parent kiosk on the front desk to sign your child in or out. Use your key fob to proceed through the double glass doors.
* Children must be taken to their classroom upon arrival, or to the classroom that is open for their age group (if they arrive before their homeroom teacher).
* Arriving by 9:00 am allows children to fully participate in the day’s activities and maximize learning.
* If the parent sign in kiosk is not working, sign your child in/out on the sign in sheet on top of the cubbies by your child’s classroom.
* Please put your child’s am snack, pm snack, water bottle and lunch box on top of the cubbies.
* We ask that parents supervise their children in the parking lot, driveway, reception area and hallways when arriving or departing from the center. Please do not allow children to run ahead of you in the parking lot or driveway. Older siblings should accompany parents in the building and not be left to explore the facility.
* Check your child’s mailbox and cubby and take home lunchbox, jacket, materials, etc.
* Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 18 years old.
* Children will only be released to those listed on the child’s application form and those authorized in writing. Authorization is required in writing when another person other than who is listed on the child’s application form is picking up. Email and messages through the Procare Parent App are accepted.
* Please notify LLA in advance of planned **absences** and as soon as possible in the case of unexpected absences.

# Confidentiality and Children’s Records

All information contained in your child’s records, including your personal information, is confidential. Anyone who is not directly involved in the care of your child or affiliated with childcare licensing, protective services, or other government agencies will not have access to the records without your written authorization or a court order.

As a parent or guardian, you have the right to add or update information in your child’s records at any time. If you withdraw your child from the center, we will maintain your child’s records for the minimum period of time required by state childcare licensing regulations.

# Mandated Reporting Requirements

It is our mission to ensure all children in our care are safe and well cared for – not only while they are at our center, but at all times. The law requires everyone who works directly with children to report suspicions or evidence of child neglect or abuse to the proper authorities. Those who fail to report, according to individual state childcare licensing regulations, can be held accountable under the law. The law prohibits interference with an individual’s attempt to report child abuse or neglect.

# Emergency Situations and Evacuation Plans

To maintain a safe environment, we make every attempt to be prepared for potential emergency situations. We regularly practice emergency evacuations as required by the North Carolina Division of Child Development. In addition, an emergency plan is posted in each classroom. All employees are trained upon hire and at least once a year on emergency plans put in place by our preschool. If a genuine emergency requires evacuation, we will notify you as soon as possible.

# Child Accidents

We take every precaution to make sure your child is safe, and that you receive communication regarding accidents or injuries. Despite our best efforts, accidents do sometimes happen. If your child is injured at our center, you will receive an incident report in the Procare Parent App. If your child needs treatment by a healthcare professional, we will contact you as soon as possible.

# Custody and Visitation

If a custody order relating to your child exists, a copy must be provided to the director and placed in your child’s file. This information is confidential and solely for the safety and well-being of your child. By law, we must follow the stipulations of the court order. Families must update administration when custody orders change or expire.

# Media Release

Throughout the year, Little Life Academy will be taking photographs and video to record various activities. We may wish to use your child’s photograph or student work for promotional or educational reasons – such as in posters or on our church website or our Facebook page. We do not specifically identify children when we use such items. For example, we may title a photo “fun with friends” but we would NOT title it “Tommy and Savannah on the swings.” On the enrollment application, parents choose to either grant permission for photo use or decline permission (photos will still be sent to parents in the Procare Parent App).

# Weapons and Violence

Family members, children, and guests are strictly prohibited from carrying firearms or other weapons on our property and at events sponsored by Little Life Academy. When a parent or child’s behavior threatens the safety of others, or if a child or parent becomes abusive towards other children, parents, or staff in the center, we reserve the right to immediately disenroll that child.

# Parent Behavior

We understand that a parent may get upset from time to time over certain circumstances. All threatening, foul, or demeaning language, bullying, harassment, and yelling will not be tolerated at the preschool and could result in immediate disenrollment. If you have a concern that needs to be addressed, please see a member of management and we will be happy to set up a time in the office to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

# Drug-Free and Smoke-Free Environment

At Little LIFE Academy, your child’s health is always a priority to us! Our goal is to be an example of excellence when it comes to health and safety for your family, our staff, and visitors. Therefore, our property is now smoke-free at all times.

You will see tobacco-free signage at LLA indicating that smoking and the use of all tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and vaping products, are not allowed on our property. We kindly ask that you support our efforts and not smoke or use tobacco products on our property at any time.

The purpose of this policy is to protect your child and our staff and visitors from the harms of tobacco use and secondhand smoke. If you use tobacco and are interested in quitting, please call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or go to [www.quitlinenc.com](http://www.quitlinenc.com).

A tobacco-free campus policy sets the right example by showing children healthy behaviors. We are committed to fostering and maintaining a healthy and safe environment for everyone. Staff, family and guests are prohibited from smoking inside the building or on the property. At no time shall anyone ever use, consume, sell, manufacture or be under the influence of any alcohol or illegal drugs on the premises.

# Fenced Area

There are fenced in areas around the building that provide children with outside play while maintaining safety. These areas are constantly being monitored. If your child is outside at time of your pick-up, we ask that you first go in and gather your child’s belongings from their cubby and sign them out at the sign in kiosk. Then you may go back out the front doors and over to the gate by the playground. Parents are not permitted on the playground. Teachers will be watching for parents to arrive and will bring your child over to you at the gate.

# Celebrations and Birthdays

We love to celebrate special occasions with your child.  If parents would like to send treats for their child to commemorate a special event with the class, they are welcome to do so.  Please coordinate with your child’s teacher to plan a time for the celebration.   

If parents choose to send food items in for a celebration, these items must be commercially made.  We suggest doughnut holes or mini cupcakes as a good treat; children can enjoy either of these without the waste that often comes when full-size cupcakes are brought. Parents are welcome to join the celebration as well, if their schedule permits.  NOTE: For children in the 2’s classrooms, healthier options are preferred (i.e. mini muffins instead of cupcakes, etc.).

Potty Training

Teachers at LLA work to coordinate potty training efforts with those of the families (potty training packet given to all 2’s parents at the beginning of the school year.  There is no pressure on the child, but opportunities are given for the child to use the bathroom.  There are regular times for trips to the bathroom, but there is never pressure or punishment connected with these times.  Throughout the day, “accidents” may happen, and these are handled by adults encouraging children to change their own clothes, when possible, to build self-help skills.  “Accidents” are never handled by shaming or embarrassing. If a child has 3 potty accidents in underwear, the teacher will put a pull-up on for the remainder of the day.

**Note: Children entering any class other than the Lambs (2-year-olds) must be completely potty trained.**

Rest Time

Children at LLA have a rest time each day (we try to allow children to have 2 full hours to nap, if needed).  Children may bring a blanket and/or stuffed animal for rest time.  This time helps the children rest their physical bodies, unwind emotionally, practice self-control, and stay healthy and alert during afternoon activities.

# Parent Participation

We welcome parent participation at LLA! Parents are offered the opportunity to attend bi-yearly parent/teacher conferences with their child’s teacher, and may also participate at LLA in numerous other ways:

* By joining us for weekly chapel
* By dropping in for lunch with their child
* By attending class events at LLA.  These events include such things as the Christmas Celebration, Pastries for Parents and seasonal festivals
* By volunteering:  reading to the class, sharing about jobs or hobbies that coincide with curriculum topics, helping teachers with tasks such as cutting and collating, etc.
* By participating in special learning/parenting programs offered
* By donating items such as tissues, paper towels, wipes, hand sanitizer, etc.

# Educational Emphasis

Skills taught at LLA are based on what children need to learn to be ready for kindergarten.  These include:

* fine motor skills (writing, cutting with scissors, holding a pencil correctly, zipping and buttoning clothing, etc.)
* large motor skills (balancing, walking, running, skipping, etc.)
* literacy concepts (identifying front/back cover of book, letter/sound relationship, rhyming, story concepts, etc.)
* math concepts (number recognition, identifying basic shapes, counting patterns, sorting and classifying etc.)
* basic science and social studies concepts (exploring nature, making and testing predictions, learning about neighborhoods and community helpers, using maps, learning about other cultures, etc.)
* social skills (playing with other children, cooperating with teachers, sharing, self-control, respect, following directions, etc.)

As LLA children work through learning these skills, many different types of activities are used. We teach using a hands-on approach.  For example, when practicing writing numbers or letters, your child may write in the air, using finger paint, on a dry erase board or chalkboard, or even on their friend’s back with their pointer finger.

Many skills are also taught through center time, which to the children is playing; playing is how they learn.  For example, while playing dress up, they learn about zipping and buttoning, and they learn spatial relationships when they play with blocks and build.

Even our *Making Great Readers* program emphasizes movement and helps the children grasp letter sounds in such a way that they just think they are playing and having fun. As the children get older, you will see more paper and pencil activities as their fine motor skills get stronger.  We will be teaching them to write making strokes from top to bottom as they write the alphabet letters.

Children learn some of the most important lessons in life when they play with others, lessons such as how to get along with other people, how to share, how to solve problems, how to work together. They learn how to be creative and to use their imaginations and the gifts and talents that God has given them.  LLA staff members encourage and guide the children in developing their God-given strengths and help them with their weaknesses.  Our desire is to help each child grow as God intended.

# Daily Schedule

**Little LIFE Academy…A Typical Daily Schedule**

**7:00am – 8:45am**   Morning Arrival and Center Free Play

- self-help skills by putting away lunch box and personal items in their cubbies then

children can choose from: puzzles, games, books, dress-up, cars & more

**9:00 – 9:15** Morning Calendar Time/Circle Time

-learning days of the week, months of the year, counting, and daily math

**9:15 – 9:30** Daily Bible Story Time

-Children will hear a daily Bible story and learn a verse

**9:30 – 10:20** Center Time

May include math, language development, dramatic play, crafts

and writing & and reading readiness skills.

**10:20 – 10: 40**   Morning Snack

-learning how to eat healthy foods and they also get to interact with their friends in conversation

**10:40 – 11:00**   Story Time

-learning print concepts and reading readiness skills, like front of the book, title page, characters, sequencing of a story

**11:00 – 11:45** Playground or Gym Time

-gross motor skills: climbing, running, balancing, and interpersonal skills as they talk and play with other children

**11:45 – 12:00** Wash Hands and Prepare for Lunch

-learning good hygiene habits

**12:00 – 12:30**   Lunch

-eating a balanced diet, good table manners, talking with our friends

**12:30 – 1:00** Clean up from Lunch/Bathroom/ Put Cots Out

-self-help skills of cleaning up and putting our lunchboxes away

**1:00 – 3:00**   Nap Time/Quiet Time

-rest/quiet time is good for our bodies and our brains

**3:00 – 3:30** Afternoon Snack/Bathroom

**3:30 – 4:30** Playground Time or Free Play in Centers

**4:30 - 6:30** Playground Time/Free Play Centers/ Story Time/ Packing Up to Go Home

**(This is a sample schedule ONLY. Each class will have their own schedule.)**

**We have Chapel on Wednesdays.**

# Discipline/Guidance Policy Policy Adopted 08/2018

It is very important that a child’s development be nurtured through caring, patience, and understanding. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline.

There will be times, however, when we will have to respond to a child’s misbehavior. Hitting, kicking, spitting, throwing things at others, biting, hostile verbal behavior, and other behaviors that may hurt another child or an adult are not permitted. Respect for children and children’s respect for adults is central to our discipline philosophy. In light of this, we will approach discipline and guidance as follows:

**We WILL:**

* Pray for and with the children
* Respect and listen to the children
* Praise, reward, and encourage
* Ignore minor misbehaviors
* Establish clear guidelines and behavioral expectations consistent with child development
* Modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur
* Communicate desired behavior using positive language and calm voice
* Be consistent
* Give clear choices
* Model appropriate behavior
* Provide the children with natural and logical consequences of behaviors
* Redirect to another activity
* Use short, supervised periods of time-out

**We WILL NOT:**

* Spank, shake, bite, pinch, push, pull, slap, or otherwise physically punish
* Deprive a child of food or rest as punishment
* Allow discipline of children by children
* Humiliate, yell at, make fun of, threaten, use profanity, or otherwise verbally abuse a child
* Shame or punish a child when bathroom accidents occur
* Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children’s parents, families, or ethnic groups

**If a child’s behavior is very disruptive or harmful to himself or others, the issue will be discussed privately with the child’s parent or guardian. If the situation can be resolved, the child may remain enrolled. If we are unable to resolve the issue, the child may be removed from the program.**

# Biting Policy

Biting causes more upset feelings than any other behavior in preschool programs. Because it seems so primitive, people tend to react differently to biting than to hitting, grabbing or other aggressive acts. Biting is upsetting and we do take it seriously. In children under three years of age, it is considered developmentally typical behavior. Children bite for many different reasons, including teething, frustration/lack of words, and invasion of personal space. When it comes to biting, here is what you can expect from us:

* We will plan our day and arrange our classrooms in such a way so that there are always a variety of activities to keep a child’s interest.
* We will put the children’s safety first and provide appropriate first aid as well as comfort any child who is bitten.
* The teacher will express disapproval to the biter and will help the child learn more appropriate responses and to use his/her words more effectively.
* We will inform the parents of the biter as well as parents of the child who was bitten. The parent of the biter will be asked to take their child home for the remainder of the day after 3 bites or attempts (in the same day) or any bite that breaks the skin.
* For quick intervention, our teachers shadow the child who is going through a biting phase.
* A child who continues to bite will be progressively removed from the program until this behavior is eliminated.

**We appreciate your support if biting in your child’s classroom becomes an issue.**

**Biting at the Preschool**

Why does one child bite while another child does not? There are many possible reasons why children under age 3 bite. Almost none of them are the fault of a bad home, bad parents, or bad caregivers. Sometimes we think we have a good idea about what is causing the biting, but most of the time it is hard to guess what is going on inside the child’s head.

Some of the most common causes of biting:

* Teething: When teeth are coming through, applying pressure to the gums is comforting and children will use anything available to bite. Obviously, if this is a likely cause, then a teething ring or objects to bite will lessen the need to bite other people (teething necklaces are not permitted for safety reasons).
* Excitement and over-stimulation: When some very young children are excited, even happily so, they may behave in an out-of-control fashion. For instance, a 26-month-old girl named Natasha loves moving to music. After a session with music and scarves and everyone twirling and enjoying themselves, it is very predictable that Natasha will bite someone if an adult does not help her calm down first.
* Making an impact: Young children like to make things happen, and the reaction when someone is bitten is usually dramatic.
* Frustration: Too many challenges, too many demands, too many wants, too little space, and too many obstacles may lead a child to bite, especially before they have the capability to express frustration through using language.

**Teachers at LLA are trained to do the following to try to minimize the biting behavior:**

* Let the child know in words and manner that biting is unacceptable. Adults' most stern manner and words should be reserved for acts such as biting.
* Remove the biting child from the situation and focus caring attention on the child who was bitten.
* Examine the context in which the biting occurred and look for patterns. Was it crowded? Too few toys? Too little to do? Too much waiting? Is the biting child getting the attention and care he/she deserves at all times?
* Change the environment, routines, or activities, if necessary.
* Work with the biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in a more appropriate manner, including learning/using words if the child is capable. Teachers understand that emotions themselves are never wrong, but a child must learn what are appropriate ways to express/release big emotions.
* Observe a child who is a short-term chronic biter to get an idea about when he or she is likely to bite. Some children, for example, may bite not when they are angry or frustrated, but when they are very excited.
* Identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of becoming bit.
* Don't casually attribute willfulness or maliciousness – sometimes children are just impulsive and lacking self-control.

**What can a parent do if their child begins to bite?**

Possibly removing significant stresses on the child at home, such as a schedule that is too demanding or difficult transitions, will make it easier for a child to handle times of stress that do arise. Try some of the same steps suggested above. Acknowledge the issue, validate the emotions, but always be firm and consistent in handling biting or attempted biting. If the child is biting at the child care center, there is very little you can do other than keep in close communication with the child’s teachers. Fortunately, biting is a stage that passes.

**What if your child is bitten?**

Seeing a bite mark on your child is very difficult to handle. All our parental primal instincts as our child’s protector come into play. It is natural to be upset. But try to keep in mind that it is a consequence of the group situation and not really the fault of the child, the family, or the program. Your child might as easily have been the biter. Little Life Academy does not release the name of the biting child for this reason.

**How long should the program stick with a biting child?**

Good child care centers work very hard to make the program work for every child and take extraordinary measures to help a child overcome the "biting habit." Sometimes it feels to parents (and occasionally teachers) that too much time passes before a child is disenrolled. Here at LLA, when a child has had 3 bites (or attempts to bite), we will send that child home for the day. This is a protective measure for the rest of the children, and it also gives the biter a change of environment. If the behavior continues, the child may be suspended for a few days or a week.

The good news is that all biting children will grow out of it. This happens to the great relief of all: the biting child, the other children and their parents, the staff, and most of all, the biting child’s family.

**Additional Resources:** Need more information on what to do if your child bites? A child psychologist offers her suggestions on parentcenter.com. HealthForums.com gives insight into some of the possible causes of biting and outlines some suggested forms of intervention.

# When Children Need More

While we plan for every child to succeed at LLA, there are certain times that children need more than we are able to provide. We do operate on a large ratio and group size, and sometimes the ongoing stimulation in the class may be too much for certain children. In these rare circumstances, we will try alternative methods to help calm the child and make their transition as smooth as possible. If a child becomes unable to take direction from their teachers or from administrators, disenrollment may occur. Although these actions are rare, sometimes it is in the best interest of the child to be enrolled in a smaller setting for more individualized teaching.

# Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma

**Belief Statement**

We, Little Life Academy, believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families.

**Background**

SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death1. According to North Carolina Child Care Rule (child care centers, 10A NCAC 09 .0608, family child care homes, 10A NCAC 09.1726), each child care facility licensed to care for children up to five years of age shall develop and adopt a policy to prevent SBS/AHT2.

**Procedure/Practice**

Recognizing:

• Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high-pitched crying, difficulty

staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

Responding to:

• If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will3:

o Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.

o Call the parents/guardians.

o If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR4.

Reporting:

• Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported to Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) by calling 1-800-859-0829 or by emailing webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov.

• Instances of suspected child maltreatment in the home are reported to the county Department of Social Services. Phone number: \_\_704-336-3000

**Prevention strategies to assist staff\* in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child**

Staff first determine if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies5:

* Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child.
* Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees.
* Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
* Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
* Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy
* Take the child for a ride in a stroller.

• Turn on music or white noise.

• Other: prayer

In addition, the facility:

• Allows for staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the

children6.

• Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed.

• Other: prayer

**Prohibited behaviors**

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

• shaking or jerking a child

• tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat

• pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture

**Strategies to assist staff members understand how to care for infants**

Staff reviews and discusses:

• The five goals and developmental indicators in the 2013 North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and

Development, ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF\_forms/NC\_Foundations.pdf

• How to Care for Infants and Toddlers in Groups, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families,

www.zerotothree.org/resources/77-how-to-care-for-infants-and-toddlers-in-groups

• Including Relationship-Based Care Practices in Infant-Toddler Care: Implications for Practice and Policy, the Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers, pages 7-9, www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nitr\_inquire\_may\_2016\_070616\_b508compliant.pdf

**Strategies to ensure staff members understand the brain development of children up to five years of age**

All staff take training on SBS/AHT within first two weeks of employment. Training includes recognizing, responding to, and reporting child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment as well as the brain development of children up to five years of age. Staff review and discuss:

• Brain Development from Birth video, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families,

www.zerotothree.org/resources/156-brain-wonders-nurturing-healthy-brain-development-from-birth

• The Science of Early Childhood Development, Center on the Developing Child,

developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-ecd/

**Resources**

List resources such as a staff person designated to provide support or a local county/community resource:

Sonya Scott Jones, Director and Kim Hobbs, Assistant Director

**Parent Web Resources**

• The American Academy of Pediatrics: [www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-h](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-h)ome/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx

• The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome: http://dontshake.org/family-resources

• The Period of Purple Crying: http://purplecrying.info/

**Facility Web Resources**

• Caring for Our Children, Standard 3.4.4.3 Preventing and Identifying Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma, http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView.cfm?StdNum=3.4.4.3&=+

• Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/trprev/Preventing\_SBS\_508-a.pdf

• Early Development & Well-Being, Zero to Three, www.zerotothree.org/early-development

**References**

1. The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome, www.dontshake.org

2. NC DCDEE, ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/general/mb\_ccrulespublic.asp

3. Shaken baby syndrome, the Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/shaken-baby-

syndrome/basics/symptoms/con-20034461

4. Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED, American Red Cross,

www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA\_CustomProductCatalog/m4240175\_Pediatric\_ready\_reference.pdf

5. Calming Techniques for a Crying Baby, Children’s Hospital Colorado, [www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-](http://www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-)and-advice/calm-a-crying-baby/calming-techniques

6. Caring for Our Children, Standard 1.7.0.5: Stress http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/1.7.0.5

**Application**

This policy applies to children up to five years of age and their families, operators, early educators, substitute providers, and uncompensated providers.

**Communication**

Staff\*

• Within 30 days of adopting this policy, the child care facility shall review the policy with all staff who provide care for children up to five years of age.

• All current staff members and newly hired staff will be trained in SBS/AHT before providing care for children up to five years of age.

• Staff will sign an acknowledgement form that includes the individual's name, the date the center's policy was given and explained to the individual, the individual's signature, and the date the individual signed the acknowledgment.

• The child care facility shall keep the signed SBS/AHT staff acknowledgement form in the staff member’s file.

Parents/Guardians

• Within 30 days of adopting this policy, the child care facility shall review the policy with parents/guardians of

currently enrolled children up to five years of age.

• A copy of the policy will be given and explained to the parents/guardians of newly enrolled children up to five years of age on or before the first day the child receives care at the facility.

• Parents/guardians will sign an acknowledgement form that includes the child’s name, date the child first attended the facility, date the operator’s policy was given and explained to the parent, parent’s name, parent’s signature, and the date the parent signed the acknowledgement.

• The child care facility shall keep the signed SBS/AHT parent acknowledgement form in the child’s file.

\* For purposes of this policy, "staff" includes the operator and other administration staff who may be counted in ratio, additional caregivers,

substitute providers, and uncompensated providers.

Effective Date 1-8-2024

This policy was reviewed and approved by: Sonya Scott Jones 12-13-2024

Director Date

Annual Review Dates

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rule for Child Care Centers

**Licensed centers must, at a minimum, meet requirements in the following areas.**

**What Is Child Care?**

The law defines child care as:

• three or more unrelated children under 13 years of age

• receiving care from a non-relative

• on a regular basis, at least once a week for more than four hours per day but less than 24 hours.

It is only when all of these conditions exist that regulation is required. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care. This is carried out through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The purpose of regulation is to protect the

health and well-being of children while they are away from their parents. The law defining child care is in the North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110. The North Carolina Child Care Commission is responsible for adopting rules to carry out the law. Some counties and cities in North Carolina also have local zoning requirements for child care programs.

**Child Care Centers**

Licensing as a center is required when six or more children are cared for in a residence or when three or more children are in care in a building other than a residence. Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the regulations described below if they choose not to be licensed. Child care centers may voluntarily meet higher standards and receive a license with a higher rating. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants.

**Two through Five Star Rated License**

Centers that meet the minimum licensing requirements will receive a one-star license. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a two through five-star rated license. The number of stars a program earns is based upon the education levels their staff meet, the program standards met by the program, and one quality point option.

**Child Abuse, Neglect, or Maltreatment**

Every citizen has a responsibility to report suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment. This occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. It may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. It also occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, appropriate discipline, or when a child is not in a safe environment. **North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child maltreatment at** **a child care facility to report the situation to the Intake Unit at Division of**

**Child Development and Early Education** at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829**.** Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a reportmade in good faith. **North Carolina law requires any person who suspects**

**child abuse or neglect in a family to report that to the county department of social services.**

**Parental Rights**

• Parents have the right to enter a center at any time while their child is present.

• Parents have the right to see the license displayed in a prominent place.

• Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined.

**How to Report a Problem**

North Carolina law requires staff from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to investigate a child care center when there has been a complaint. Child care providers who violate the law or rules may be fined, issued an administrative action, and may have their licenses suspended or revoked. Administrative actions must be posted in the facility. If you believe that a child care provider fails to meet the child care requirements, or if you have questions, please call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829.

**Education and Training**

The administrator of a child care center must be at least 21 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. Lead teachers in a child care center must be at least 18 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. If administrators and lead teachers do not meet this requirement, they must begin credential coursework

within six months of being hired. Staff younger than 18 years of age must work under the direct supervision of staff 21 years of age or older. All staff must have current certification in CPR and First Aid. All staff must complete health and safety training and a minimum number of ongoing training hours annually, ITS-SIDS training is required the administrator and any caregiver that works with infants 12

months of age or younger. One staff member must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care training and plan.

**Criminal Background Checks**

Criminal background qualification is a **pre-service requirement.** All staff must undergo a criminal background check initially, and every five years thereafter.

**Staff/Child Ratios**

Ratios are the number of staff required to supervise a certain number of children. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group. The minimum staff/child ratios and group sizes for single-age groups of children in

centers are shown below and must be posted in each classroom. A sample staff/child ratio chart can be found on the DCDEE website under “Provider Documents and Forms”.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age | Teacher: Child Ratio | Maximum Group Size |
| 0-12 months | 1:5 | 10 |
| 12-24 months | 1:6 | 12 |
| 2 to 3 years old | 1:10 | 20 |
| 3 to 4 years old | 1:15 | 25 |
| 4 to 5 years old | 1:20 | 25 |
| 5 years old and Older | 1:25 | 25 |

Centers located in a residence licensed for six to twelve children may care for up to three additional school-age children, depending on the other children in care. When

the group has children of different ages, staff-child ratios and group size must be met for the youngest child in the group**.** Staff/child ratios for multi-age groupings are outlined in the child care rules and require prior approval

**Space and Equipment**

There are space requirements for indoor and outdoor environments that must be measured prior to licensure. Outdoor play space must be fenced. Indoor equipment must be clean, safe, well-maintained, and age appropriate. Outdoor equipment and indoor furnishings must be child size, sturdy, and free of hazards that could injure children.

**Record Requirement**

Centers must keep accurate records such as children's, staff, and program. A record of monthly fire drills and quarterly shelter-in-place or lockdown drills practiced must also be maintained. A safe sleep policy must be developed and shared with parents if children younger than 12 months are in care. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma policy must be developed and shared with parent of children up to five year of age.

**Curriculum and Activities**

Four and five-star programs must use an approved curriculum in classrooms serving four year old children. Other programs may choose to use an approved curriculum to earn a quality point for the star-rated license. The Division website maintains a list of approved curriculums for four-year-old children. Activity plans must be available to parents and must show a balance of active and quiet activities. A written activity plan that includes activities intended to stimulate the developmental domains, in accordance with North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development. Rooms must be arranged to encourage children to explore and use materials on their own and have choices.

**Health and Safety**

Children must be immunized on schedule. Each licensed center must ensure the health and safety of children by sanitizing areas and equipment used by children. Meals and snacks must be nutritious and meet the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care. Food must be offered at least once

every four hours. Local health, building, and fire inspectors visit licensed programs to make sure standards are met. All children must be allowed to play outdoors each day (weather conditions permitting) and must have space and time provided for rest. They must provide age-appropriate toys

and activities. Centers must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care training and plan.

**Transportation**

Child care centers providing transportation for children must meet all motor vehicle laws, including inspection, insurance, license, and restraint requirements. Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and child-staff ratio must be maintained.

**Discipline and Behavior Management**

Each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must give parents a copy when the child is enrolled. Changes in discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect. Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, or other physical discipline) is prohibited in all centers. Religious-sponsored programs which notify the Division of Child Development and Early Education that corporal punishment is part of their religious training are exempt from that part of the law.

The law and rules are developed to establish minimum requirements. Most parents would like more than minimum care. Child Care Resource and referral agencies can provide help in choosing quality care. For more information about choosing quality child care, parent resources and/or the in North Carolina law and rules, contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919 814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829; or visit our homepage at *www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov*

**This summary shall be posted for the public to view in accordance with G.S. 110-102**

**Division of Child Development and Early Education**

**NC Department of Health and Human Services**

**333 Six Forks Road Raleigh, NC 27609**

**Child Care Commission**

**https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/Child-Care-**

**Commission**

**Revised September 2023**