

# Parent Handbook



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## Little Lakers Academy

73 Prim Road Suite # 8

(802)862-SAIL

### **Dear Family,**

We are thrilled that you have chosen Little Lakers Academy for your child. The journey of early childhood education begins in our infant room, where we provide a nurturing start. Our toddler room offers a warm, structured environment that allows students to grow and learn while feeling safe and comfortable. In our preschool room, our primary goal is to prepare young minds for kindergarten by encouraging verbal skills, teaching self-help skills, and promoting self-assurance.

No matter which classroom your child joins, our program offers a nurturing environment that feels like home. We understand that children spend a significant amount of time in their childcare program, so we strive to become part of your extended family. At Little Lakers Academy we create an environment where your child can flourish socially, develop positive self-concepts, enhance language and literacy skills, foster physical well-being, express creativity, prioritize safety, and learn about healthy nutritional practices.

Our teachers empower children to learn and grow through a blend of open-ended activities, exposure to cultural diversity, problem-solving challenges, and experimentation. Your child will explore a variety of subjects, including science, dramatic play, music, language arts, mathematics, yoga, mindfulness, and much more.

Our educators are dedicated to tailoring the curriculum to meet the unique needs of each age group. Each classroom is thoughtfully divided into interest areas, promoting interactions that support emotional, social, intellectual, and physical growth daily.

Additionally, our indoor gym provides a dynamic space where children can engage in activities and stay active, even during inclement weather. We are committed to facilitating, observing, and encouraging your child as they explore their surroundings and enrich their learning journey.

While this handbook provides an overview of our policies and terms of care, it cannot anticipate every situation or question. Little Lakers Academy reserves the right to add new policies and to change or cancel existing ones at any time. This handbook supersedes all previous handbooks and management memos.

Thank you for considering Little Lakers Academy. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely, The Little Lakers Academy Team

## **Philosophy and Approach**

Little Lakers Academy's educational philosophy integrates various teaching methodologies, including Reggio Emilia, Montessori, Waldorf, and our own discovery-based learning approach. We believe in building strong relationships, observing, and engaging in meaningful conversations to tailor our curriculum to meet each child's unique needs.

## **Learning Environment**

We provide a home-like environment where children are encouraged to discover and learn, fostering strong, positive relationships with both adults and peers. Our goal is to help children develop positive self-concepts by creating an atmosphere that promotes successful experiences.

## **Character Development**

We emphasize character development by teaching and demonstrating values such as caring and respect. Our objective is to offer quality, professional, and nurturing childcare. We honor and recognize individual differences among children, focusing on each child's strengths to facilitate their overall development.

## **Childcare Commitment**

Children in our care are supported to the fullest extent of our caregivers' abilities, allowing them to grow and explore at their own pace with professional and compassionate guidance. Our aim is to create an environment where every child can thrive and reach their full potential.

## **Creating a Nurturing Environment at Little Lakers Academy**

At Little Lakers Academy, our mission is to cultivate a nurturing environment for children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age. We emphasize safety, friendliness, and nurturing care to ensure every child feels secure and valued. Understanding that each child has a unique developmental journey—socially, physically, and intellectually—our experienced teaching staff celebrates this diversity. We honor individuality by empowering children to think independently, make decisions, solve problems, and express their thoughts and emotions.

We firmly believe in fostering a strong partnership between home and school. Collaboration between families and educators is essential for a child's holistic development.

## Our Key Goals at Little Lakers Academy

1. **Foster Positive Self-Esteem and Enthusiasm for Learning:** Encourage children to care for the environment and build a positive self-image.
2. **Promote Physical Strength and Coordination:** Support motor skill development through engaging activities.
3. **Instill Healthy Habits:** Emphasize nutrition, rest, and personal hygiene.
4. **Lay the Groundwork for Lifelong Health and Safety:** Teach practices that contribute to long-term well-being.
5. **Encourage Critical Thinking and Self-Awareness:** Develop children's problem-solving and introspective abilities.
6. **Teach Constructive Emotional Expression:** Guide children in expressing their emotions healthily.
7. **Provide Opportunities for Creative Expression:** Use music, movement, dramatic play, art, and language to stimulate creativity.
8. **Cultivate Appreciation for Diversity:** Foster respect for different natural, cultural, and social landscapes.
9. **Stimulate Intellectual Curiosity:** Encourage perseverance in the face of challenges.
10. **Ensure Quality Care and Communication:** Facilitate strong communication between parents and teachers to address each child's unique needs.
11. **Empower Parents:** Help parents understand and appreciate their children's development.
12. **Promote Independence:** Support children in attending to their personal needs.
13. **Tailor Learning Environments:** Customize classroom settings and programs to meet individual needs.
14. **Create an Enriching School Experience:** Ensure a positive and fulfilling experience for every child.

By striving to achieve these goals, we provide an environment where every child can thrive and reach their full potential.

## ACT 166 Partnership and Funding

Little Lakers Academy (LLA) is proud to partner with the ACT 166 program to offer 10 hours of free care to children aged 3-5. To qualify for this additional funding, children must turn 3 years old before September 1st. These 10 hours will be deducted from your child's tuition fees throughout the year.

Our curriculum follows the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) program and Teaching Strategies Gold, ensuring a high-quality educational experience.

Please note that this funding or discount is applicable only during the public-school calendar period, from September 5th, 2024, to June 7th, 2025.

## Admission and Enrollment Procedures at Little Lakers Academy

1. **Completion of Forms:** All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and the enrollment fee and first week tuition payment must be paid before your child's first day of attendance.
2. **Deposit Requirement:** In addition to the registration fee, we require a one-week deposit for your child, which is also non-refundable. A 4-week notice is required if you choose to withdraw your child for any reason, and with proper notification, the deposit can be applied towards your last week of care.
3. **Admission Age Range:** Based on availability, our facility admits children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age.
4. **Introduction to Program:** Our process for introducing children to our program involves parents and children exploring our program together. A partial day or a few hours a week may be beneficial to help your child adjust to the transition.
5. **Non-Discrimination Policy:** Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs, as long as we can provide a safe and supportive environment.
6. **Application Fee:** Little Lakers Academy requires a \$50.00 application fee, payable through Square. This fee is non-transferable, nonrefundable, and cannot be credited towards tuition.
7. **Waitlist Procedure:** When enrollment for a specific age group is full, admission may be declined. To be placed on our waitlist, only an application fee and a fully completed application form are necessary. Enrollment for the upcoming school year is typically granted to previously enrolled children and families, with any remaining vacancies offered to those on our waitlist.
8. **Tuition Payment for Enrollment:** Tuition payment is required from the date when enrollment becomes available. For example, if enrollment is available starting on September 5, 2024, and you intend to start your child on October 5, 2024, you must pay tuition starting from September 5, 2024, to secure your spot.

## ASQ3 Assessments and Parent/Teacher Conferences

At Little Lakers Academy, we conduct Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3) assessments twice annually for each child, typically in October and May. To ensure accurate administration and scoring, our staff undergo training or refresher courses before each scheduled assessment.

Following the completion of the ASQ3, we invite you to participate in parent/teacher conferences via Zoom. These conferences provide valuable one-on-one time to discuss your child's assessment results and development. This is an excellent opportunity to address any concerns or simply engage in a dialogue about your child's progress.

If any concerns arise from your child's assessment, we will collaborate closely with you to explore and provide support options that best suit your child's needs.



## **Biting Incident Policy**

It is developmentally typical for young children to engage in biting behavior. In the event of a biting incident, both the parents of the child who was bitten and the parents of the child who engaged in the biting will be informed. The identity of the child involved will be kept confidential.

Upon the occurrence of a biting incident, we will collaborate with the parents to identify the cause and determine the appropriate steps to address the situation. You will receive a photo of the injury and a brief description of the incident via the Lillio app. If the app is unavailable, we will provide a paper report at the end of the day.

If biting incidents occur more than three times in one day causing skin to break, we may request that your child be picked up for the remainder of the day. This measure is taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in our care.

## **Check-In/Check-Out Policy**

If someone other than a parent will be picking up a child, we require written permission that includes the individual's name and the date. This written permission should be sent via the Lillio app. Upon arrival for pick-up, the designated individual must present their driver's license or photo ID. The child will only be released to the designated individual once proper identification has been provided.

## **Cleaning and Sanitization**

Our classrooms, toys, and facilities undergo regular cleaning in accordance with Vermont State Regulations and COVID-19 guidelines, exceeding the required standards to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff.

## **Communication**

Our teachers utilize both written and verbal communication methods. Primary communication occurs through the Lillio application, which you will receive information about along with your application. Through this app, you can choose to communicate directly with your child's teacher or the owner/director.

Additionally, teachers are available to speak with you during pick-up or drop-off times. If needed, you can also reach out by calling the center during business hours (7:30 am - 4:30 pm) to speak with a staff member or director at 802-862-SAIL (7245)

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality regarding family information and conversations is strictly maintained. We also expect parents to respect the privacy rights of other families.

## **Curriculum**

Our curriculum revolves around weekly themes implemented across all classrooms at the center. Each classroom customizes the curriculum to suit the specific age group, while aligning with the center-wide themes. Activities include art, sensory exploration, music, reading, sign language, and exercises to enhance fine and gross motor skills.

## **Closing Due to Extreme Weather**

In the event of severe weather or other conditions (such as snowstorms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, or loss of water) that prevent us from opening on time or at all, we will notify families through multiple channels:

- Notifications will be posted on local school closing lists on WCAX.
- A message will be sent via the Lillio app.

Additional information will be shared prior to the winter months.

If early closure becomes necessary, we will promptly contact you or your designated emergency contacts. Please note that arranging for your child's early pick-up is your responsibility.

## **Dress Code and Safety Guidelines**

Please ensure your child is dressed in comfortable and practical attire that allows for freedom of movement and is suitable for the weather. Throughout the day, your child will participate in various activities such as painting, outdoor play, sand play, and other sensory activities. Our playground serves as an extension of the center, and outdoor programs are conducted daily, weather permitting.

To mitigate risks associated with clothing, please be aware of potential hazards such as drawstrings that could become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment. As a precaution, all drawstrings from children's clothing should be removed.

For safety reasons, we discourage the use of sandals and flip-flops during center activities, as they may impede your child's ability to participate fully in certain activities. Your attention to these guidelines ensures the safety and comfort of all children at our center. Thank you.

# Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

We adhere to guidelines from the US Department of Health regarding weather conditions that may affect outdoor play. Please refer to the guide below:

## Understand the Weather

### Wind-Chill



- 30° is *chilly* and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is *cold*
- 0° to 15° is *very cold*
- 32° to 0° is *bitter cold* with significant risk of *frostbite*
- -20° to -60° is *extreme cold* and *frostbite* is likely
- -60° is *frigid* and exposed skin will freeze in 1 minute

### Heat Index



- 80° or below is considered *comfortable*
- 90° beginning to feel *uncomfortable*
- 100° *uncomfortable* and may be *hazardous*
- 110° considered *dangerous*

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit.

## Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)

Air Temperature	Wind Speed in mph								
	Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
10	10	-1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-16
0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43
-20	-20	-34	-41	-45	-48	-51	-53	-55	-57
-30	-30	-46	-53	-58	-61	-64	-67	-69	-71

Green: Comfortable for outdoor play      Yellow: Caution      Red: Danger

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)

Temperature (F)	Relative Humidity (Percent)												
	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
90	91	93	95	97	100	103	106	109	113	117	122	127	132
94	97	100	102	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
100	109	114	118	124	129	136							
104	118	124	131	137									
110	130												

2009

## Water Play Guidelines

At our center, unsupervised communal water play is strictly prohibited. Only supervised children are allowed to participate in water play activities. We take comprehensive precautions to prevent the spread of communicable diseases during these sessions. Mandatory handwashing follows each child's participation at the sensory table to maintain hygiene and safety for all.

## Discipline/Behavior Management

At Little Lakers Academy, our discipline practices are centered on positivity, support, and non-physical, non-threatening methods. When faced with challenging or disruptive behaviors, we establish clear boundaries and gently redirect children towards positive alternatives. If behavioral challenges persist, we adjust the environment and implement effective teaching strategies.

To ensure transparency and collaboration, we provide daily behavior logs and maintain open communication with parents to address concerns collaboratively and develop a plan that prioritizes everyone's safety. Instances of increased aggression or disruption

will be communicated to parents through in-person discussions, messages via Lillio, and behavior logs.

Parents and teachers will work together to create an action plan, which will be implemented for a two-week period to evaluate its effectiveness. At the end of this period, parents and teachers will meet again to assess progress and determine the child's continued enrollment at Little Lakers Academy.

In cases involving dangerous or unsafe behaviors, specific guidelines are in place. Any behavior resulting in physical harm to others may require temporarily removing the child to a safe environment until they are ready to rejoin group activities.

## **Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures at Little Lakers Academy**

### **Drop-Off Procedures:**

- **Opening Time:** Our center opens at 7:30 am. Please refrain from dropping off your child before this time.
- **Parent Accompaniment:** Parents are expected to accompany their children during drop-off. Please assist with handwashing, placing personal items in cubbies, and refrigerating dairy items.
- **Official Start Time:** The official start of our day is at 9:00 am. All children must be present by this time.
- **Late Drop-Offs:** If your child has a morning appointment conflicting with our 9:00 am policy, please notify us 24 hours in advance for alternative drop-off arrangements. If arrival by 11:00 am is unavoidable, ensure your child arrives by then to avoid disruption to meal and nap times. If not feasible, it's best to keep your child home for the day.
- **Non-Attendance:** Children who are not present by 9:00 am, or without prior notification, cannot attend school. Similarly, if your child has an appointment starting at 11:00 am or later, they should remain home for the day.
- **Professionalism:** Adherence to these policies helps maintain a professional school atmosphere, distinguishing us from babysitting services.

### **Pick-Up Procedures:**

- **Closing Time:** We close promptly at 4:30 pm. Please ensure you arrive with ample time to sign your child out and exit the building by closing time at 4:30 pm.

## **Late Pick-Up Policy**

Late pick-up is not a standard option within our program and will only be accommodated under exceptional circumstances. If a child is picked up past the closing time of 4:30 PM, additional charges will apply at a rate of \$2.00 per minute.

For families with repeated late pick-ups, a \$50.00 fee will be imposed starting from the third occurrence and for each subsequent instance. This fee must be settled before your child can return to our care.

## Hours of Operation

Our regular operating hours are from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, except during holidays and inclement weather. Please refer to the current calendar for a list of holidays.

There will be no reduction in tuition due to center closures.

In the event of severe weather or other conditions that prevent the program from opening on time or at all, notifications will be made via TV (WCAX), SMS text, and Lillio messages.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or someone listed in the Emergency Contact and Release form. It will be your responsibility to arrange for your child's early pick-up within the allotted.

## Family Resources

We maintain close partnerships with the following resources:

- Children's Intervention Services: For children aged 3 and under, contact at 802-764-5294.

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/services/cis/IDEA>

- EEE (Early Essential Education): For children aged 3 and up, please contact the child's school district.

<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/early-education>

- Vermont Family Network: For support with language and cognitive delays, contact at 1-800-800-4005.

<https://www.vermontfamilynetwork.org/>

- Howard Center: For assistance with behavioral concerns, contact at 802-488-6000.

<https://howardcenter.org/>

- Child Care Resource: For financial assistance and parent training/education, please reach out for support.

<https://www.childcareresource.org/>

- DCF (Department of children and families) 1-802-863-7370

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/>

## **Feedback and Communication Policy**

Your feedback is highly valued. If you have any concerns or complaints, please address them directly to the primary educator or owner/director. You can do so verbally, via email, or in writing. Additionally, we will schedule Parent Nights twice per school year to provide opportunities for discussions regarding concerns, complaints, or positive feedback. Please note that we are unable to address concerns or complaints if we are unaware of the situation.

Furthermore, we will distribute a yearly survey to gather feedback and assess our program. This allows families to voice any concerns anonymously and helps us continuously improve our services.

## **Family Engagement Policy**

We recognize that each family serves as a child's primary educator and deeply value the role families play in the growth and development of children in our program. We actively encourage parents and other family members to engage with our program through classroom visits, event participation, and feedback on the program.

We offer numerous opportunities for families to contribute to the establishment and achievement of our program goals, including:

- Annual summer ice cream social
- Field trips
- Graduation ceremonies
- Concerts
- Green up day
- Playground clean up
- Community Garden
- Donuts with grown ups

Your involvement is integral to our community, and we look forward to your active participation.

## **Field Trip Policy**

Field trips are organized for classrooms with children aged 2 and above at various times throughout the year. Please watch for notifications regarding upcoming trips. Written permission is required for your child to participate. If you choose not to grant permission for your child to attend, you may bring your child to school upon the class's return. Please note that your child may not join another classroom during this time.

Field trips may be canceled on short notice due to factors such as insufficient parent chaperones, inclement weather, or safety concerns. Additionally, children are not permitted to ride with other parents. Adequate chaperones are crucial to ensure the success and safety of these trips.

## **Fire Drill/ Lock Down Drills**

As part of our commitment to safety, we conduct monthly fire drills and lockdown drills. Each classroom is equipped with a posted evacuation plan detailing the necessary steps. During drills, children will be escorted outside to a designated meeting area in an orderly manner. Please be aware that these drills are conducted without prior notice and will proceed regardless of weather conditions.

To further enhance safety measures, every classroom is equipped with an emergency/first aid backpack and an iPad for accountability purposes. These provisions ensure that all individuals are promptly accounted for and protected during emergencies.

These protocols are designed to prioritize the safety and well-being of everyone within our care.

## **Nutrition Guidelines for Meals and Snacks**

To ensure your child's nutritional needs are met, please provide one meal and two snacks daily, each with at least two options. If your child has specific preferences or dietary restrictions, additional food may need to be provided for that day.

All food items should be packed in a sealed, labeled lunchbox and dated daily. Please include two ice packs to maintain freshness. We encourage you to offer healthy choices for your child's meals and snacks.

It's important that all food is prepared and ready for your child's consumption. This includes cutting food items and ensuring they are appropriately prepared for serving, such as hot dogs, grapes, or meat. Please provide silverware, cups, and dishes for daily use, as additional supplies are not available.

For dairy products, please ensure they are labeled, dated, and stored in the classroom refrigerator to maintain food safety standards.

Families are responsible for providing daily meals for individual consumption. Please follow these guidelines:

- Meals must be packed in a sealed, labeled lunchbox.
- Lunchboxes can be purchased from various retailers such as Walmart, TJ Maxx, LL Bean, Target, Hannaford, etc.
- We can warm meals using microwaves; warm items should be in a separate container.
- Lunchboxes will not be refrigerated; each must contain two ice packs as per licensing regulations.

Thank you for your cooperation in providing nutritious meals for your child

Here are some good lunch box suggestions for a balanced, nutritional lunch:

1. Bean & cheese dip with tortilla chips (or crackers)
  - Provides protein and fiber from beans, and calcium from cheese. Tortilla chips (or crackers) add carbohydrates for energy.
2. Tropical fruit salad
  - Offers a variety of vitamins and minerals from different fruits, providing natural sugars for energy and fiber for digestion.
3. Broccoli
  - Rich in vitamins C and K, as well as fiber, promoting overall health and digestion.
4. Milk
  - A good source of calcium and vitamin D for bone health, and protein for muscle growth and repair.
5. Chicken strips with whole wheat roll
  - Lean protein from chicken supports muscle growth and repair. Whole wheat roll provides complex carbohydrates for sustained energy and fiber for digestion.
6. Orange wedges
  - High in vitamin C, which supports immune function and skin health.
7. Cheese quiche
  - Offers protein and calcium from cheese, along with carbohydrates from the crust. Provides a satisfying and nutritious option.
8. Fresh fruit cup
  - Provides a variety of vitamins and minerals, natural sugars for energy, and fiber for digestion.
9. Whole wheat macaroni & tuna salad
  - Whole wheat macaroni offers complex carbohydrates for energy and fiber for digestion. Tuna provides lean protein and omega-3 fatty acids for heart health. Green beans and carrots add additional vitamins and minerals.
10. Leftovers
  - A nutritious home cooked meal.

These lunch options offer a balance of protein, carbohydrates, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals to support overall health and well-being.



## **Food Sharing and Special Events**

Food brought from home for sharing is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food intended for sharing with other children must be store-bought and in its original packaging.
- Homemade baked goods are allowed if fully cooked, do not require refrigeration, and are made with freshly purchased ingredients. A list of ingredients is required, and there must be enough for all children.
- All food items should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children may only share food intended for all children; personal family snacks are not permitted.
- Leftover food will be discarded, except for items that do not require refrigeration or are in an unopened commercially wrapped package.
- If your child will not be eating the food provided by the center, please ensure they have a balanced, nutritious lunch. We are available to provide suggestions if needed.

### ***For Special Events***

- You may provide a special treat for your child's class to celebrate their event. Please coordinate this with your child's teacher in advance, considering any food allergies within the class.
- We kindly ask for your cooperation in not distributing special event invitations at school unless all children in the class are invited, to avoid any child feeling excluded from the celebration.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all children.

## **Food Allergies**

If your child has a food allergy, it is crucial to notify us in writing so that we can accommodate their needs effectively. Please include a list of suitable food substitutions, and ensure this information is updated annually. For children requiring allergy medication, please refer to the Medication section.

Additionally, please provide us with food items that can be stored in our freezer if your child has a food allergy. These items will be served during special events or celebrations to ensure their safety.

Given the seriousness of food allergies, each child with an allergy must have an emergency action plan completed by their family physician. Common allergens include peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, and wheat. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher or Director.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe environment for all children.

## **Allergy Notification Policy**

Upon enrollment or diagnosis, we kindly request that families inform us of any food or environmental allergies their children may have. Families with children diagnosed with allergies must provide a detailed letter outlining the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care plan.

To ensure the safety of all children, a prominently displayed list of known allergies will be maintained in the main area and kitchen. Our staff is trained to carefully review and adhere to this list to prevent exposure to allergens. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

## **Hand Hygiene Protocol**

Upon arrival, it is mandatory for parents to wash both their child's hands and their own. Throughout the day, teachers are required to wash children's hands:

- Before and after eating,
- After entering the premises,
- Before and after diaper changes or bathroom use.
- After sensory play
- After wiping a child's nose

Additional hand washing will be conducted as necessary to reduce the spread of germs, adhering to state regulations.

Thank you for your cooperation in maintaining a healthy environment for all children and staff.

## **Health Records Requirement**

Valid records signed by your doctor are required to start our program and must be updated annually. Please ensure prompt submission of updated records. If a waiver is needed for non-vaccinated children, please consult with the Director. Failure to provide these records may prevent your child from attending our program.

Additionally, each child must have documentation of a well-child visit within 45 days of enrollment

## **Insurance**

Little Lakers Academy is fully insured with Liability coverage. Licensure: We hold full licensing from the State of Vermont.

## **No Smoking/Vaping Policy**

To protect the health of infants and young children, the indoor and outdoor environments, as well as vehicles used by the center, are designated as non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is strictly prohibited on the center's premises, including within a 50-foot radius from the building. This policy aims to safeguard against the harmful effects of secondhand smoke on developing bodies.

## **Prohibited Substances**

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is also prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

## **Dangerous Weapons**

A dangerous weapon refers to firearms, knives, razors, or any object capable of inflicting bodily harm, whether by its manner of use or intended use. Families, children, staff, or guests (excluding law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be allowed onto the premises.

In cases where a gun or any other weapon is clearly present on our premises, the Colchester police will be contacted, and the individuals involved will be promptly removed from the premises. This policy applies to both visible and concealed weapons.

## **Child Custody**

In the absence of a court document, both parents/guardians are presumed to have equal rights to custody. However, we are legally obligated to adhere to the directives of the parent/guardian with legal custody, as determined by a certified copy of the most recent court order, an active restraining order, or a court-ordered visitation schedule. We do not assume the responsibility of determining legal custody in cases where there is no court documentation.

## **Child Release**

In the event that we have reasonable cause to suspect that any individual picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in a manner that may jeopardize the child's safety, we reserve the right to take necessary actions to protect your child.

This may include requesting another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick up the child or contacting the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Persistent occurrences of such situations may result in the dismissal of your child from the program.

## Cubbies/Clothes Bins

Upon enrollment, each child will be assigned a personal cubby, clearly labeled with their name. Please check your child's cubby daily to ensure that any items needing to be taken home are collected and necessary supplies are replenished.

## Communication & Family Engagement

- **Daily Updates:** Our staff provides daily notes to keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center.
- **Newsletters:** Monthly newsletters, containing center news, events, and announcements, are posted on the Lillo app.
- **Parent Resources:** We share various parent resources as they become available and provide references in our main entrance for your convenience.
- **Family Visits:** Family participation is welcomed. You are invited to visit classrooms, volunteer, accompany us on field trips, or share a meal with your child.
- **Conferences:** Family and teacher conferences are held twice a year to discuss your child's strengths, preferences, and learning styles. Together, we'll set goals for your child's growth and development. Additional conferences can be requested at any time, and we encourage open communication about any concerns you may have.

## Open Door Policy

We highly encourage family members to actively participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are warmly welcomed to visit the program at any time during regular program hours. In the infant room, parents/guardians are invited to nurse or feed their infants.

Please note that while we have an Open Door Policy, this does not mean that external doors will be left unlocked. To ensure the safety and protection of the children, external doors will remain locked at all times.

While our team is committed to communicating with parents/guardians, please understand that staff members' primary focus during regular program hours is caring for the children. Therefore, engaging in lengthy discussions may not always be feasible. If a situation warrants a more in-depth conversation, we kindly ask that you schedule an appointment to ensure uninterrupted attention.

## Emergency Procedures

- **Lost or Missing Child:** In the rare event that a child becomes lost or separated from the group, all staff members will immediately initiate a search for the child. If the child is not located within three minutes, both the family and the police will be notified.
- **Fire Safety:** Our center is equipped with fire extinguishers that undergo annual inspections for safety and functionality. Our fire evacuation plan is regularly reviewed with both children and staff. Monthly fire drills are conducted, and the

- results are documented on the bulletin board in the office for transparency.
- **Emergency Transportation:** If your child requires emergency medical transportation and no other authorized person can be reached, an ambulance will be called for immediate transportation. A staff member will accompany and stay with the child until a family member or designated emergency contact arrives.

## **Photography and Publicity**

Periodically, photos may be taken of the children at our center for internal use or publication on our website. Written consent will always be obtained before utilizing any photographs.

We respect the privacy of our families, and unless otherwise specified by the family, we will not use pictures or names of children for publicity purposes.

## **Portfolios**

Each child's progress, learning, and skill development are documented daily using the Lillo app. This app maintains a comprehensive portfolio that includes pictures, videos, and developmental milestones throughout your child's time at LLA.

## **Rest time**

Infants follow their own sleep schedule and are placed on their backs for sleep. Caregivers/teachers maintain continuous visual and auditory supervision of infants and check on sleeping infants every 15 minutes.

After lunch, children under 5 years old engage in quiet rest time. Participation in sleep is optional, and children may engage in quiet activities if they choose not to sleep.

Each child is allowed one "love," such as a small blanket or stuffed animal, to assist with sleep. The lovey must fit inside the provided pillowcase and remain at the center for the week. For infants under 12 months, no blankets or toys are placed in cribs.

Scheduled 30-minute rest periods are compulsory, although children are not required to sleep. Quiet activities are offered to those who opt not to rest after the 30-minute period. Infants under 12 months are assisted in falling asleep based on their individual needs and cues. While infants may rest for any duration, they may be gently awakened if 4 hours have passed since their last feeding

## **Safety Policy**

Our teachers are trained in First Aid, Infant/Child CPR, and AED, with certifications renewed every two years to ensure proficiency. Teachers are also trained in Medication Administration. Additionally, we have established emergency procedures, and emergency contact numbers are posted with access to a telephone.

# School Closings



## LITTLE LAKERS ACADEMY LLC. SCHOOL CALENDAR 2024- 2025



August 2024							February 2025						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
				1	2	3	24	25	26	27	28		1
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28	

16th: Tuition Due  
26th-30th: Closed for in-service  
27th: Closed for Cream Social

September 2024							March 2025						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
29	30						30	31					

2nd: Labor Day- School Closed  
10th: Tuition Due

October 2024							April 2025						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31			27	28	29	30			

12th: Tuition Due  
21st: Early Closure 4pm

November 2024							May 2025						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
					1	2					1	2	3
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

8th: Tuition Due  
18th-22nd: Parent Teacher Conferences  
25th-29th: Thanksgiving Break

December 2024							June 2025						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30					

6th: Tuition Due  
20th: Preschool Concert 2:30pm  
23rd-25th: Closed for Winter Break

January 2025							July 2025						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
26	27	28	29	30	31		27	28	29	30	31		

1st: Closed for New Year Day  
3rd: Tuition Due  
21st: Tuition Due

24th-28th: Closed for Staff Break  
28th: Tuition Due

28th: Tuition Due

21st-25th: Staff Professional Development  
25th: Tuition Due

2nd: Green up day  
5th-9th: Teacher Appreciation Week  
23rd: Tuition Due  
26th: Closed for Memorial Day  
30th: Donuts with Growups 9am

6th: Preschool Graduation Day  
20th: Tuition Due  
23rd-27th: Parent Teacher Conferences

23rd-4th: Independence Day- School Closed  
18th: Tuition Due

*Little Lakers Academy will close due to severe weather conditions in accordance with the decisions made by the Colchester School District and or at the discretion of the Program Director.*

An announcement of our closure will be accessible on the WCAX website, along with a center-wide message sent via SMS and Lillio. Full payment is necessary for closures resulting from circumstances beyond the control of the daycare, such as prolonged power outages, hazardous weather conditions, unsafe road conditions necessitating travel restrictions, and other emergencies.

Please note that tuition is expected to be paid in full regardless of center closures, family vacations, non-attendance due to illness, or personal leave.

## **Separation**

It is common for children to experience difficulty separating from their parents, which can also be challenging for the parents themselves. However, after the parent departs, the child often becomes engaged in activities, while the parent may only remember the child's initial tears. It is important to note that this transition may not always be resolved immediately. Separation anxiety is developmentally appropriate and typically appears around nine months of age and again around eighteen months.

To help prepare your child for separation, consider the following steps:

- Have conversations with your child about what to expect and discuss the activities they can look forward to during their day.
- Maintain a consistent daily routine to provide your child with a sense of security and predictability.
- Encourage your child to become involved in an activity upon arrival at the daycare.
- When it's time to leave, inform your child that you're departing and then follow through. While it can be difficult for parents, it's essential to leave promptly to avoid prolonging your child's anxiety. Consistency in this process is crucial for establishing a routine, and drop-offs will likely become smoother as you trust in the process and adhere to it.
- Our teachers are available to support you and your child in coping with separation anxiety.
- Feel free to reach out to us via phone or message through Lillio to check in on your child throughout the day.

## **Sickness Policy and Medical Emergency Plan**

We adhere to state recommendations and guidelines concerning health concerns for infants and toddlers. Below are some examples, though not exhaustive, of reasons you may need to pick up your child: If your child exhibits any of these symptoms while at school, you will be notified to pick them up within an hour. If we are unable to reach you within thirty minutes, we will contact emergency contacts provided.

## **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFM) Policy**

If a child begins to exhibit symptoms of hand, foot, and mouth disease, such as red bumps on the hands, feet, or around the mouth, we will promptly notify parents to pick up their child. It is advisable for the child to be evaluated by their pediatrician. If the diagnosis confirms hand, foot, and mouth disease, the child should not return to care until all symptoms have resolved.

Children with open sores or blisters in or around the mouth, on the hands or feet, or in the diaper area should not attend daycare. They may return once all blisters have opened and scabbed over.

## COVID-19 Policy

Children and staff members who test positive for COVID-19 will be excluded from participating in in-person activities. They must stay home for a period of 5 days following their positive test result. Additionally, children with a fever exceeding 100.4°F must remain at home until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., Advil, Tylenol).

## Diarrhea Policy

### *For toilet-trained children:*

- Attendance will not be permitted, or the child will be sent home, if they experience one instance of uncontrolled or explosive diarrhea, or two loose or watery bowel movements within an 8-hour period.

### *For diapered children:*

- Attendance will not be permitted, or the child will be sent home, if they have two instances of diarrhea that cannot be contained within the diaper.
- The child may return once the bowel movements can be contained within the diaper (24 hours after exclusion).

Exclusively breastfed infants will be given special consideration.

## Feeling Ill Policy

- In the event of a behavioral change due to illness, medication can be administered with parental permission. A completed medication form and consent via Lillio are required before any medication can be given. If your child continues to exhibit discomfort and requires more care than the center can provide, they will be excluded from care.
- If your child is unable to participate in daily activities, the director reserves the right to send them home. Additionally, if your child has a fever or other symptoms indicating illness, they will be considered too sick to attend and will be sent home.

## Fever Policy

A fever is determined when the underarm thermometer reads 99.4°F or higher. If your child exhibits a fever and experiences a behavioral change, medication may be administered with written parental consent. However, your child will need to be sent home and must remain fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before they can return to our care. Children may not return the following day unless the fever was caused by an ear infection.

## Lice Policy

Parents are required to treat their child according to prescribed treatments if lice are detected. Meanwhile, the center will thoroughly clean and sanitize the



classroom and all contents. Your child must be treated before returning to the center. Additionally, your child's head must be free of nits and lice, and they will be checked for nits by an educator before re-entering the classroom.

## **Rash Policy**

Rashes may appear at the conclusion of a virus or alongside a fever. Medication may be administered with written consent from the parent or guardian. However, if the child continues to experience discomfort and requires additional care, they will need to be taken home. If the child develops a fever or exhibits symptoms that impede their ability to participate in normal activities due to discomfort, they will be deemed too unwell to attend and will need to be picked up.

- In such cases, a physician's diagnosis will be required. Documentation from the physician, outlining the treatment provided, will be necessary for phone approvals and office visits. Your child may return to the center once the physician advises it is appropriate to do so.

## **Vomiting Policy**

- If your child vomits within a 24-hour period, they are considered too unwell to attend. If your child vomits while in our care, they will be sent home. Please note that spitting up, reactions to overeating, or postnasal drip are not considered vomiting. If your child vomits at 8:30 AM and does not vomit again, they must still remain home the following day.

## **Illness Outbreak Policy**

If more than 50% of the group displays the same symptoms or rash (even without a behavior change or fever), the Director may choose to close the center at their discretion to prevent the spread of illness.

*Please note that tuition fees remain due even in the event of center closure*

### ***Return to School Policy:***

Your child may return to school once they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication. If your child was sent home for being unwell, they may not return the following day. An exception is made for ear infections if a doctor permits an earlier return and the child is able to participate; in this case, please provide a note from the doctor. Upon arrival, the director will conduct a health check to ensure your child is free from symptoms.

### ***Medication Administration Policy:***

All medications must be handed directly to a staff member along with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should not be left in the child's cubby, backpack, or given to the child to administer themselves. Our staff will ensure that all medication is accurately recorded and dispensed according to the provided instructions.

For prescription medications:

- The first dose **MUST** be administered at home to monitor for any adverse reactions.
- A note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician are required.
- The medication label should include the child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the physician's contact information.
- All prescription medications must be in the original container.

For non-prescription medications:

- Written permission and instructions signed by the parent are required.
- The written permission should include the child's name, dosage, current date, and frequency, and must be accompanied by the original container of the medication.
- Non-prescription medications should not be administered for more than three days unless authorized by a physician.
- Over-the-counter medications will not be administered if there are no symptoms present.
- We only administer Tylenol in specific circumstances, such as after vaccinations.

For topical ointments, sunscreen, and insect repellent:

- Written authorization from the parent is required, specifying the frequency, dosage, and length of time the authorization is valid. This authorization cannot exceed 12 months.

Upon arrival, parents must complete a Medication Administration form, attached to this document. Adherence to this protocol is essential for legal compliance, as medications will not be administered unless all requirements are met. Additionally, a release of liability must be signed on the application form.

### **Emergency Procedures and First Aid Policy and Disasters**

If the center adheres to the emergency plan, parents will be responsible for all expenses related to emergency vehicle transportation. In the event of a child's injury requiring first aid or emergency services, one member of the teaching team will attend to the injured child while the other tends to the remaining students.

In emergency situations, we will enact our disaster plan and convene at a designated location. Additionally, teachers have received training in lockdown procedures to address potential intruder situations.

Immediate 911 calls will be made for the following situations:

- Difficulty breathing or inability to breathe
- Bluish, grayish, or purplish skin or lips
- Unconsciousness
- Vomiting blood
- Stiff neck accompanied by headache and fever
- Head, neck, or back injury
- Unresponsiveness
- Suspected poisoning
- Chest pains or pressure
- Severe bleeding
- Suspected broken bones
- Seizures
- Persistent abdominal pain or pressure
- Signs of severe dehydration such as sunken eyes, lethargy, absence of tears, and reduced urination

Parents will be contacted for a child who:

- Has a fever and appears more than mildly ill
- Exhibits a rapidly spreading red or purple rash
- Passes a significant amount of blood in stool
- Sustains an injury potentially requiring medical treatment such as stitches
- Suffers any bite that breaks the skin
- Has any medical condition outlined in the child's care plan requiring attention

First aid will be administered for:

- Cuts, scrapes, bruises, nosebleeds, etc.
- Cleaning all abrasions
- Applying bandages
- Applying ice packs if necessary

Procedure for Assessing and Responding to Life-Threatening Conditions:

1. Assess the situation: If the child is conscious, ask questions such as "What's your name?" to help assess their condition. Continuously monitor their breathing and pulse.
2. Check for breathing: If the child is unconscious, check if they are breathing.
3. Administer resuscitation: If the child is not breathing, administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation following the correct procedures. Initiate CPR immediately.
4. Check for injuries: Start from the head downwards. Provide this information to medical personnel as needed.

By adhering to these procedures, we aim to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in our care.

## **Commitment to Child Development and Special Needs Policy**

We are dedicated to meeting your child's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs to the best of our ability, considering our staffing ratio and facility resources. Any necessary modifications and emergency procedures for enrolled children with special needs will be established and maintained in consultation with the child's support team. We will collaborate with families to arrange appropriate accommodations or, if necessary, determine alternative solutions. The final decision regarding such matters rests with the Program Director.

If professional referrals are deemed necessary, written parental permission will be required. Our educators frequently collaborate with external agencies and resources, including the Early Essential Education (EEE) program at the local public school, the Family Infant and Toddler Program (FITP), the Child Care Resource & Referral Center (CCR), and the state licensing agency.

Additionally, we offer a variety of special and extracurricular activities throughout the week to enrich your child's experience. These include events such as Bike Day, yoga sessions via iPad, show and tell, Book Day, Buddy Dubay music sessions, Pajama Day, and various cooking and or social activities.

## **Staff / Providers Policy**

Before employment, all staff members are required to undergo a criminal background check conducted by the State of Vermont. They must have a clean record with no history of criminal activity or child abuse. Our staff are hired in accordance with VT State regulations.

## **Caregiver Training and Development Policy**

Our caregivers undergo orientation and continuous training, completing a minimum of 15 hours of professional development annually. This training covers various areas including:

- Child growth and development
- Creating healthy and safe environments
- Implementing developmentally appropriate practices
- Guidance techniques
- Fostering family relationships
- Understanding cultural and individual diversity
- Upholding professionalism standards

Please note that any arrangements made outside of LLA, and our program are considered private matters and are not affiliated with or endorsed by LLA.

## Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. To ensure alertness and reduce fatigue, all caregivers receive scheduled breaks. We adhere to the following child-to-staff ratios:

Age	Maximum Group Size	Staff/Child Ratio
Birth to 18 months	8	1:4
18 months -24 months	10	1:5
24 months -32 months	10	1:5
36 months to kindergarten	20	1:10
1st grade and up	26	1:13

## State Regulations

We strictly adhere to all regulations established by the State of Vermont Child Development Division. Copies of these regulations are available for your reference below, at each teacher's station in every classroom, and on our website. Our practices align with the Child Development guidelines outlined by the State of Vermont Child Development Division.

If you have any concerns or complaints, please do not hesitate to contact the Director, Danielle Parah, or the Owner, Nadia Dacres. We take all concerns seriously and are committed to collaborating with families to address them. For further assistance with any complaints, you may reach out to the Child Care Consumer Line at 1-800-649-2642.

[https://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/CDD/Docs/Licensing/CBCCPP\\_Regulations\\_FIN\\_AL.pdf](https://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/CDD/Docs/Licensing/CBCCPP_Regulations_FIN_AL.pdf)

## Guidance and Discipline Policy

At Little Lakers Academy, we are committed to fostering a supportive, safe, and inclusive environment where every student can thrive academically and emotionally, free from discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center is dedicated to providing all students with the necessary opportunities and resources to reach their full potential and to cultivate meaningful connections within the school community.

We prioritize proactive measures, including thoughtful planning and clear communication of consistent rules, to prevent behavioral issues and promote appropriate conduct. By involving children in problem-solving and emphasizing fairness, respect for others and property, and accountability for their actions, we aim to instill self-discipline and social responsibility in our students.

Our discipline policy reflects our philosophy of positive guidance, focusing on proactive strategies that support children's development and well-being.

## **Addressing Challenging Behavior**

At Little Lakers Academy, we cultivate an environment where children are encouraged to interact with each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Every student at our center is entitled to:

- Learn in a safe and supportive environment
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Receive assistance and guidance from compassionate adults

In instances where a child exhibits verbally or physically aggressive behavior, we intervene promptly to ensure the safety of all children. Our approach to addressing challenging behaviors focuses on teaching children how to resolve conflicts through appropriate communication and interactions. If disciplinary action is necessary, it will be administered in a clear, consistent, and age-appropriate manner.

We maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying. If you have any concerns regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to report it to the Director or Owner of the center.

## **Physical Restraint Policy**

At our center, physical restraint is strictly prohibited as a form of discipline. However, in exceptional circumstances where the safety of a child or others is at risk, we may need to temporarily hold a child gently to maintain safety. This measure will only be employed for as long as necessary to regain control of the situation and ensure the well-being of everyone involved.

## **Items your child will need**

### ***Infants***

- You can provide a written description of your child's typical day, along with any additional information you wish to share, through the Lillio app.
- Diapers and wipes (cloth diapers are also welcome)
- Bottles (Breastmilk or formula; one for each feeding required. State regulations prohibit washing and reusing bottles. Bottles must be pre-made to prevent contamination and labeled with the child's name and date.)
- Swaddles or sleep sacks
- Pack and play size crib sheet
- Pacifiers (permission slip required)
- Bibs and spoons for feeding
- Family photos (3-5)
- Please dress your child in weather-appropriate clothes that can get messy.
- Lunchbox clearly labeled with two ice packs

- Diaper cream (permission slip needed)
- Water bottle (for ages 6 months and older)
- Wet bag for soiled clothes (provided in all classrooms)

### ***Toddler-PreK***

- Family photos (3-5)
- Lunchbox clearly labeled with two ice packs
- Roll out mat for rest time, along with a zippered bag/pillowcase (ages 1+) these can be found at amazon, target, Walmart)
- Comfort items for rest time or when feeling sad (ages 1+)
- Please dress your child in weather-appropriate clothes that can get messy.
- Extra seasonal clothes (multiple sets needed for toilet training children)
- Sunscreen (permission slip needed, no aerosol)
- Water bottle (for ages 6 months and older)
- Wet bag for soiled clothes (provided in all classrooms)



## **Toilet Training**

The key to a successful and stress-free toilet learning experience lies in a strong partnership between families and teachers that supports the child. Research underscores that children can only effectively learn toilet use when they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally prepared. Many pediatricians suggest that most children under the age of 24 months lack the physical capability to control bladder and bowel muscles.

Effective toilet training typically begins when children exhibit signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and demonstrate curiosity or interest in the process. Our commitment is to collaborate with you to ensure that toilet learning aligns with your child's physical and emotional readiness and your family's concerns.

Teachers and parents will work together to facilitate a positive toilet training experience, tailored to each child's unique needs and schedules. Please ensure your child has multiple changes of clothes, including underwear and pants/shorts that are easy to manage.

## **Toy Policy**

We kindly ask that you refrain from allowing your child to bring toys from home into the center for the following reasons:

- Toys from home may carry different scents and germs, which we aim to keep out of the school environment.
- There is a risk of toys getting lost or damaged while at school.
- We promote sharing materials at school, and sometimes, children may be less inclined to share when they have their own toys from home, leading to potential conflicts.

Children are permitted to bring one "lovey," such as a small blanket or stuffed animal, to assist with sleep. However, this item must fit in the provided nap bag and remain at the center for the week.

We offer a diverse range of manipulative materials for children to explore within the center. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that all toys from home are kept at home to minimize germ transmission and potential conflicts. However, on designated show-and-tell days, children are encouraged to bring a small toy from home to share with their peers. Additionally, comfort items are allowed during rest time and transitional periods.

## **Transitioning from Home to Care**

Your child's transition in childcare should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

The transition from home to the center is an important step for both you and your child. Before your child's first day, we invite you to tour the center (approximately 15-20 minutes), meet your child's peers and teachers, and discuss any concerns you may have.



Additionally, please take this opportunity to inform us of the most effective communication methods for reaching you. We want to ensure that we can easily connect with you to address any needs or updates regarding your child's care.

## **Electronic Media Usage**

As part of our regular daily routine, we do not typically incorporate electronic media such as television, videos, DVDs, or computer use. However, on occasion, we may utilize carefully selected videos without advertisements as educational tools and discussion aids. Prior to use, all electronic media will be carefully screened to ensure it consists of non-violent and high-quality educational content.

Our primary objective is to offer your child a positive experience while enhancing their understanding of the world. Electronic media will be provided as an optional activity, employed to achieve specific developmental objectives, and restricted to no more than 15 minutes per week per child.

Children under the age of two will not have screen time.

## **Celebrations/Holidays**

We would like to inform you that Little Lakers Academy will no longer be celebrating holidays. Our center is committed to remaining neutral in all aspects of families' religious and cultural beliefs. This decision has been made to ensure an inclusive and respectful environment for everyone.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

We highly encourage family involvement through volunteering. Your assistance can greatly benefit our community by helping with various activities such as field trips, events, center maintenance, and landscaping. Your support and participation are greatly appreciated.

## **Withdrawal**

We kindly request a written notice of withdrawal at least 4 weeks in advance. Full tuition payment is required for the entire notice period, irrespective of whether you choose to fulfill the 4 weeks or not. Any withdrawal notices provided during the week will take effect from the following week, regardless of circumstances.

## **Tuition and Fees Payment**

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due every 4 weeks via square for the following month. It will take 24 hours for that payment to post and will be pending until Monday, as outlined in the Enrollment Agreement. A non-refundable registration fee is due prior to enrollment.

- We accept ACH and Credit Cards for payment with their respective fees starting January 2nd, 2024:
- Credit Card Fee: 2.95% /transaction
- ACH Fee: 0.6%- with a new minimum fee of \$0.25 and maximum of \$2.

## **Late Payment Charges**

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore, we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact. If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$15 will be added to your next tuition payment for each day that it is late. If your account has not been paid in full within 5 business days, your child may be discharged from the program. Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date. If payment is more than 5 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees. Rejected Transaction Charges or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$35. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

If your tuition is subsidized by the Child Care Financial Assistance Program, any outstanding balance becomes the family's responsibility and will be invoiced according to the center's schedule. Tuition remains due regardless of your child's illness or your family's vacation plans. All families are required to sign a contract before enrollment begins. Tuition payment is required from the date the space becomes available (e.g., if space is available from 9/3/24 and your child starts on 10/8/24, tuition is due from 9/3/24 to reserve the spot). Tuition will increase annually. This increase will take effect during the week of Labor Day each year.

Child Care resource income guidelines increase 04/07/2024: See attached link:  
<https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/Benefits/CCFAP-Income-Guidelines-Effective-April-2024.pdf>

What childcare resource classifies as affordable childcare:

<https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/CDD/CCFAP/CCFAP-State-Rates.pdf>

## **Pandemic**

In the event of a pandemic, such as COVID-19, Little Lakers Academy will closely monitor the situation within our community. We will stay informed through guidance from our Governor, the Child Development Division, and the Vermont Department of Health.

We are committed to following all provided guidelines to the best of our ability. If the State determines the need for a shutdown, we will utilize all available assistance, including tuition coverage and payroll support. We will use our best judgment to establish a safe reopening date, prioritizing the well-being of our staff and children.

Full tuition will be required until assistance measures are implemented. Non-payment from families may result in unenrollment. In instances where Little Lakers Academy requests families to voluntarily keep their children home to maintain staff-to-child ratios, those families will be reimbursed for the tuition of the affected day.

Communication will primarily occur through Lillio, and we may schedule Zoom meetings to facilitate parent input on the situation as needed.