

# Parent Handbook



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# Welcome to Our School

## Thank You

We are so excited to welcome your family to our school and we look forward to doing all we can to exceed your expectations. This Parent Handbook is for you to read through prior to your start with us and for you to retain throughout your entire time at our facility. On your child's first day, please be sure to bring in a signed copy of the last four pages of this Parent Handbook so we can add it to your enrollment folder. Then, retain this Parent Handbook for future reference. As policies and procedures may change, please feel free to visit the school's website for a latest copy of our Parent Handbook.

## Welcome

From all of us at Learning Ladders, we sincerely thank you for joining us and for becoming such a special part of our family. This Parent Handbook serves as a simple guide to help you navigate through our school's policies and procedures. Please review this carefully and address any questions you may have with school administration. We are always happy to answer your questions, so please see us at any time.

## **Our Mission**

The mission of our school is to foster independence, promote analytical thinking and creative problem solving by utilizing culturally and developmentally appropriate practices to provide stimulating early care experiences, which promote students' social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development. We support students by laying strong foundations in being responsible, gracious, and confident citizens of tomorrow's world.

## **International Baccalaureate Mission Statement**

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## **The Standards and Principles That Govern and Guide Our Program**

Learning Ladders pledges to diligently adhere to all guidelines and standards set forth by the State's Early Learning Standards, International Baccalaureate Programme and the State's Licensing Agency. Our policies and procedures are reflective of the New Jersey Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers.

## Tuition & Attendance

The following are some standard rules regarding attendance and payment. For the safety of all children, the child must be brought to the school and the staff must be told that he/she has arrived so their arrival can be recorded on the attendance sheet. Students from the Early Learning Center are expected to be in class no later than 10am unless for a doctor's appointment. For students in the Primary School, they are expected to be in class no later than 8:45 am unless for a doctor's appointment. Please remember that tuition charges will start at the time contracted and cannot be adjusted for late arrival or early pickup. For those on a part-time or full-time schedule, make-up days or hours for any reason including sickness are not permitted. If a child is expected to be absent, we ask that the parent email the school administration so we can notate this on their attendance roster. For the drop-ins, a maximum number of up to 4 times a month is allowed after which the child must be enrolled in the program full or part time.

## Financial Agreements

Upon enrollment families are provided with a Financial Contract. This contract should be carefully reviewed and checked for errors. The contract states the days and hours your child may be at Learning Ladders as well as the amount paid at the time of enrollment. This contract is binding and can only be changed with approval and signatures from parents and the Administrative Directors.

## Enrollment Policy

A security deposit equaling to the first month of tuition is due via check at the time of registration as well as the registration fee and annual material fee. The security deposit is applied to students' last month with the school. Registration Fee, Annual Material Fee, Security Deposit and Tuition once paid is non-refundable. A student's start date once chosen can only be changed one month earlier or later. For example, the start date is in November, the student can start in October or December. The change to the start date must be requested via email one month before the desired start date. The tuition starts from the 1st of the month and is not pro-rated for mid-month start/withdrawal. **There is no waiver or refund of any tuition or deposit for closings for any reason including snow days, health emergency, sickness, pandemic, natural disasters, partial months, vacations, absences, or mid-year departures.**

## Documents for Enrollment

To complete your child enrollment, the following documents are required:

- 1) Signed Application
- 2) Last 4 pages of Parent Handbook
- 3) Tuition Express Form
- 4) 3 passport size photos
- 5) Immunization records/ Copy of Covid vaccination if applicable
- 6) Universal Health Record
- 7) Copy of the Child's Birth Certificate
- 8) Social Media Waiver
- 9) Emergency Contact Form

School documents can be found on the school website.

## Tuition Payment

Student tuition is processed by the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month via Tuition Express or submitted in cash. No other forms of payment are accepted for monthly tuition. Any tuition that is not deposited by this date is considered late and subject to a \$100 late fee. If payment is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, it will automatically trigger the one full calendar month notice period. Any unpaid balances are turned over to an attorney for collection and any legal fees or other costs associated with collection efforts will become the responsibility of the account holder. **There is NO tuition freeze for any reasons including vacation or medical or relocation.**

## Changes of Schedule/Tuition

Please remember that tuition is due regardless of the student's absence for any reason, holidays, snow days, medical reasons, or other school closings. Student tuition is a direct correlation to a student's classroom and schedule. In the event you need to alter your child's schedule of attendance, the school administration must be notified in writing two weeks in advance. A change in the tuition will only occur if the change in your child's schedule lasts for longer than a period of four weeks.

For part-time students, the addition or reconfiguration of days of attendance will incur charges in addition to the regular tuition even if the student is absent on the regularly contracted days of attendance. Please adhere to the schedule you choose for your child to avoid additional costs.

Tuition will be adjusted as students move up to the following classroom. Tuition and the Security deposit will be adjusted at the time of transition on the first full month of the next classroom. Tuition and the Security Deposit are adjusted to match the student current schedule.

Please contact the office to receive the latest tuition fee structure.

## Holidays and School Closings

Learning Ladders is open year-round and closed on the following days.

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents Day
- Easter/ Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day (including the day after Thanksgiving)
- Christmas Day

Please consult the school calendar for details. If a holiday falls on Saturday, it will be observed on the preceding Friday and if a holiday falls on Sunday it will be observed on the following Monday. Learning Ladders will be closed for a week in the year for annual maintenance. Please remember that fee and attendance substitutions cannot be made because of school closings. Learning Ladders reserves the right to change the off days with sufficient prior notice.

**Weather Cancellations:** In the event of a substantial snowstorm or other weather event, there may be a delayed opening or closing of the school. School will announce this information via email. Please remember that tuition is due regardless of holiday, student's absence, center closing, or weather cancellation.

## Withdrawal Policy

To end your child's enrollment at Learning Ladders, one (1) full calendar month prior written notice in writing must be given to the school administration. Please note that tuition and any other fee is neither refunded nor pro-rated for mid-month or mid-year start or withdrawal or non-start. Tuition and other fees will remain the responsibility of the parents during those months. As we are unable to predict enrollment demand, a child may not be able to re-enroll once removed from the program. If a parent does not wish to give prior notice of termination, then the rate for one month must be paid in full plus the security deposit will be released to Learning Ladders. A security deposit equivalent to one month's tuition is applied towards the last month of attendance if suitable withdrawal notice is given. E.g., If December is going to be the last month, then the school needs to be notified no later than 30th November and the security deposit is applied to December. If withdrawal information is received after 30th November, then security deposit is forfeited, and parents are responsible for December tuition. Learning Ladders may terminate a child's enrollment immediately if the child's or parent's behavior threatens the physical or emotional well-being of one or more of the other children or staff.

### **Non-Discriminatory Policy**

Learning Ladders is an equal opportunity employer and provider of early childhood services. Applications are considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. All programs, privileges, rights, and activities are made available to all children, families, and people.

### **Monitoring**

Learning Ladders offers a unique opportunity to monitor children through in-class cameras in real time. Enrolling your child signifies that you approve of your child being monitored and displayed on our secure and password protected system.

### **Arrival**

Learning Ladders provides a safe environment for all students. Parents and visitors are screened at our locked front doors. Parents can walk in their child from 8:30 am to 9:00 am to their classroom. This provides a safe, clean, and healthy environment for the entire school community. Open Door Policy is subject to change by DCF or DoH or CDC or School administration.

Early Learning students cannot arrive no later than 10 am in the morning. Primary School students should be in by 8:45 am so they do not miss the daily lesson. Please note that we do not allow shoes past the reception area. We do not have stroller storage space inside the facility and have arranged for stroller parking just outside where strollers should be folded and locked by parents.

### **What to Bring for An Exciting Day**

All students learn and have fun using our vast collection of toys and developmental tools. There are just a few things that each student must bring from home. Please be sure to put your child's name on all items and remember that school is not responsible for lost or damaged items. For families with child(ren) in our infant program, we request that your child attends without any kind of shirt that has a hood or drawstring. We also ask that your child attends without any type of jewelry (earrings, necklaces, bracelets, etc.) as these objects can scratch their soft skin and can present choking hazards. Please label every item sent in with your child (first and last name).

<u>Items all students should bring:</u>	<u>Extra items that young toddlers and infants should bring:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Spare change of clothing to be stored in the classroom (change with each season)</li><li>▪ Sleeping sheet and blanket</li><li>▪ List of allergies (for Team Members to post)</li><li>▪ Sun block (15 SPF minimum), a hat, and insect repellent</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Formula and/or baby food</li><li>▪ Bottles, pacifiers, and young child cups</li><li>▪ Diapers, wipes, crib sheet, and blanket</li><li>▪ Child's sleeping and feeding schedule</li><li>▪ 2-3 sets of clothes and bibs</li></ul>

To help us keep glass items from entering our classrooms, we kindly request that families refrain from packing glass bottles, glass bowls, or any other glass storage containers with their child's lunch or other belongings.

Note about diapers: Parents must provide commercially available, disposable diapers for their child. Cloth diapers are not permitted for use in our school's environment.

## **Formula and Breast Milk for Infant Children**

We have a very specific procedure for administering formula or breast milk to children at Learning Ladders. For the safety of the children, our approach for handling milk – formula or breast milk – is to treat all forms of milk as if they are breast milk. With this in mind, we ask for your help in ensuring the following procedures are followed each day.

Protocol for receiving, storing, and administering all bottles (breast milk and formula):

- 1) Parent provides bottles of milk/formula to the Team Member upon drop-off (glass bottles cannot be used in the facility).
- 2) The bottle must have the child's name and date on it to be accepted. If the child's name or date are both NOT on the bottle, the staff will inform the parent that the bottle cannot be provided to the child.
- 3) All bottles with breast milk must come from home clearly labeled "Breast Milk" along with the child's full name and the date it is sent in (all bottles must be fully prepared at home).
- 4) Team Members must wear gloves when handling bottles containing breast milk and while feeding a child breast milk.
- 5) Formula and breast milk must never be warmed any hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Only commercial bottle steamers specifically designed to warm bottles to the appropriate temperature can be used to warm bottles. Staff are not permitted to use a microwave, boiling water, or any other means to warm a bottle.
- 6) After warming, breast milk and bottle milk can only be kept for one hour and then must be discarded if not consumed or partially consumed.
- 7) Once a child completes the bottle and/or food dish, the Team Member will place the empty bottle and/or food dish in the child's bag.

Mothers of enrolled infants are permitted to breast feed in the Team Member staff room. Staff must follow any instruction given by the child's health care provider when they guide the care of infants. The signed doctor's note with full specifications must be posted in the classroom and stored in the child's folder.

## **Solid Foods**

Protocol for receiving, storing, and administering all Solid Foods:

- 1) All food items must come with the child's name and date
- 2) No glass containers
- 3) No Nuts including, milks and creams (i.e., Peanut butter, Almond Milk)
- 4) No food once consumed cannot be sent home
- 5) All refrigerated food must be placed in the refrigerator.

## **Dismissal**

Registered parents/guardians and the authorized pick-up person(s) of enrolled students are the only people allowed to pick-up a child.

## **Release Policy**

Learning Ladders must be provided with the names of emergency contacts and any person(s) granted permission to pick up a student. Only people over the age of 18 may pick up a child. To qualify a person for picking up a student, their name, address, telephone number, and clear copy of their license must be provided via email. The designated person must provide picture identification at the time of pick-up that matches the picture identification already on file. Further, a dated and signed note/email must be provided by the parent every day another person will pick up the child. Phone calls or Tadpole notes are not an allowable means to communicate this information. In an emergency pick-up, the child's name, child's birth date, name of the person picking up the child, and the person's driver's license must be provided to the Director. The person must also present a photo ID at the time of pick-up. If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file and comply with the terms of the court order.

If a child's caregiver/parent does not arrive by 6.30PM to pick their child up from the school, the parent will be contacted at the primary call number(s) listed on their emergency call card. If they are not accessible by these numbers, school administration will then call the emergency contacts listed for child pick-up. If the emergency contacts cannot be reached and it is beyond the center's closing time, the local police and the state licensing agency must be contacted at 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873). The student will always stay with a Team Member until the appropriate emergency contact, or the authorities pick the child up. If a child's caregiver arrives at the center incapacitated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the Team Member will immediately contact the police before releasing the child. The state licensing agency will also be notified after the police are contacted. As mandated by the state licensing agency, the Team Members at Learning Ladders are required to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

### **Education/Curriculum**

Within our school's warm and comforting environment and under the guidance and instruction of our talented and qualified teachers, each child will experience an enriching combination of age-appropriate activities throughout each classroom's learning centers. To be sure children are learning at the appropriate level for their age and that program content is in alignment with established learning standards. Learning Ladders Early Learning Center (2 months- 2.6 years old) uses monthly thematic curriculum. Learning Ladders Primary School (2.6 years old – 6 Years old) uses the International Baccalaureate Programme.

### **Activities**

Students are engaged in several age-appropriate activities throughout the day. All toys and learning equipment in the classroom serve our primary goal – to develop and educate your child in a safe environment. Our educational environment is inspected and approved by the state licensing agency therefore, we cannot allow any items, toys, materials, supplies, or other equipment to be brought in by children or their families (such as toys or games from home). All children's items will be stored in their cubby. For any personal items or clothing, please remember that the loss or destruction of these items is not the responsibility of Learning Ladders, and no reimbursement is done.

### **Behavior Redirection**

Redirection, reflection time, guidance, and positive reinforcement are the techniques employed by Learning Ladders Team Members to manage child behavior. For children who are destructive or physically harmful, dismissal from Learning Ladders by contacting the parent and having them remove the child may be necessary. If a child's behavior is considered harmful to others, Learning Ladders reserves the right to terminate that child's enrollment in the program. Please also refer to our biting policy in the "For the Health and Well-Being of All" section for specific information on childhood biting.

### **Multimedia**

The use of multimedia in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Teachers may select short clips and images based upon weekly themes. Multimedia is only used in our age-appropriate classroom in our Primary School.

### **Outdoor Time**

All age groups will enjoy a scheduled amount of outdoor time each day (weather permitting). Outdoor play is a time of teacher interaction, structured group activities, and fun! Please be sure your child wears closed-toe shoes to protect them from splinters and to help them prevent stubbing their toes while playing outside and appropriate outerwear for the weather.

**Sun block:** To protect against heat and sunburn, we provide a shaded area within the playground. On days when students are scheduled to play outside, we ask that parents apply sun block in the morning. Our Team Members will reapply the sun block in the afternoon. We kindly ask that parents provide a labeled sun block with a UVB and UVA rating of SPF 15 or higher.



## Emergency Fire Drills

As an important component of our state licensing, lockdown drills are performed twice a year, evacuation drills once a year and fire drill once a month. These exercises help to practice evacuation techniques and strategy, to ensure preparedness in the event of an emergency and hence at the time of drill kids can be without footwear and/or appropriate outerwear.

## Naptime

The curriculum at Learning Ladders includes one nap per day for all children (except for the infant program, which has sleep schedules tailored to the individual needs of each infant). In the infant program (2 months – 12 months of age) students will need a fit sheet and can only use a sleep sack with the arms exposed. All bedding materials will be returned at the end of the week. No blankets at this age are allowed. Pacifiers cannot be attached by any string or materials.

All other students from 1 year of age to 6 years of age will have the opportunity for a period of rest and relaxation period after lunch. After a busy and exciting day of learning and fun, children can nap and relax as they like during this period. Children who do not wish to sleep may read a book, play a quiet game, or enjoy a book to read. For this rest period, please be sure to provide bedding and a blanket or sheet that accompanies the child each day at drop off which is returned home at the end of the week to be cleaned.

## Toilet Policy

For students transitioning from diapers to toilet, we have a set of the following guidelines to maintain a healthy and sanitary environment.

- Student's diapers are dry for more than two hours as well as a consistent dry diaper for more than two weeks
- Student start to indicate/cues that they need to use the restroom.

It is recommended for families to provide two to three sets of extra clothes during this transition time. If a child has three or more accidents in one day, we ask that the child begin wearing pull-ups for the rest of the day and we will retry underwear with the child on the following day. Again, this helps the school maintain a clean and healthy environment for all.

**Potty Wear:** To help with toilet training please dress your child in clothing that is easy for them to pull down and bring back up. For example, no clothing that had snaps, button or zippers like overall, one-piece clothing or shirt onesies. Please bring pullups with Velcro sides so when your child does need to be changed, he/she does not have to be completely undressed.

### **Expectations:** Home vs School

- 1) Students are trained to tell their teacher that they must use the restroom vs at home students have full access to the restroom.
- 2) There are many more distractions here with a larger group of kids, toys, and bustling activities.

**Nap Potty Training:** Students usually take longer to control their bodily functions while sleeping, because of this, students are placed in pull up for nap time. Students are considered fully nap time trained when they are consistently dry for the duration of naptime for a total of one month.

Guidelines for Fully Potty-Trained Students: Students who are fully potty-trained will:

- 1) Be able to TELL the adult they have to go potty BEFORE they have to go. They must be able to say the words "I have to go potty" **BEFORE** they have to go.
- 2) Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.

- 3) Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.
- 4) Be able to get off the potty by themselves.
- 5) Be able to wash and dry hands.
- 6) Be able to go directly back to the room without directions.
- 7) Be able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are outside and away from the house.

Please sign on the last page if you have read, understand, and agree with this Toilet Training Policy.

### **Daily Report/ Tadpoles App**

The daily report parents receive via the Tadpoles App every single day about their child's activities to our extensive digital Child Portfolio Program, parents and families are always involved in every step of their child's development. While the daily report keeps parents informed of the day-to-day happenings in the classroom, our digital Child Portfolio Program provides an in-depth system that charts the long-term progress of each child. Tadpole reports are sent at the end of the day via email or the app and become active on the first day your child begins school.

### **Assessment& Parent/Teacher Meeting**

Through this process, teachers record observations on each child in their classroom, conduct an assessment, and then hold parent-teacher conferences twice a year. This allows our teachers to work directly with parents in tailoring the program to the individual needs of each child. All of this comes together to support our belief that a strong relationship between our teachers and the families we serve is a crucial component of providing each child with the very best early childhood education possible.

Parents are notified via the school newsletter on what dates the Parent/Teacher meeting will be held. Parents will receive an email with the exact time and date that their child's Parent/Teacher meeting will occur.

### **Classroom Transitions**

As your child grows with us and advances to another program or age group, we will schedule some time to meet with their new teacher so we can all work together to help make this change a great experience for your child. Our teachers will do all they can to be sure this is the smoothest transition possible and that your child feels secure and happy each day! All teachers in your child's new classroom will receive an informative guide that is completed by your child's current teacher to be sure the new teachers are fully informed of your child's history, likes, dislikes, and any other imperative information that will help them get to know your child. Please note that transitions are based on certain factors including among others child's age for new class, age-appropriate developmental milestones, and space availability. At this time, we also request that parents update all their records with our office (this update is separate and in addition to regular updates a family must report whenever a family's information or a child's information experiences any kind of change from what we have on record). Please note that the tuition changes happen only upon a permanent transition to the next class.

### **Field Trips and Extracurricular Activities**

The teachers and the school administration will keep parents informed of any special activities planned for the children. A permission slip will be issued for parents to allow their child to participate in each activity. Parents and families are always encouraged to come along and experience these new discoveries with us and the children! In addition to off-site field trips, there are a variety of puppet shows, animal programs, storytellers, and other visitors who provide on-site field trip experiences.

## For the Health and Well-Being of All

When a child becomes ill at our center, the parent will be notified and asked to pick their child up within an hour. In the meantime, the child will be brought to the school's office or another isolated place to control the spread of the illness to other children. If a child becomes ill or is injured and the parent cannot be reached, the appropriate medical facility will be contacted. The parent or legal guardian is responsible for all costs incurred for medical care and/or transportation provided during the medical emergency. Please also be sure to notify the school administration when your child is not attending due to illness (or any other reason) so we can remain aware of any present viruses or other seasonal sicknesses prevalent in the community or school.

### Exclusion for Illness

Learning Ladders reserves the right to dismiss any child if the staff determines the child is too ill or presents a risk to others. At the discretion of the school administration, an additional doctor's note may be required for the child to return to the center for any instance of sickness (including the symptoms and illnesses listed in the following chart). This is to control the spread of germs and sickness throughout the facility so all children can enjoy a safe and healthy environment.

Illness/Symptom	Exclusion Period
Elevated oral temperature of 100 degrees or more	The remainder of the day and the fever free for next one school day
Uncontained acute diarrhea – one or more instances	The remainder of the day and for next one school day and asymptomatic before resuming school
Episode of acute Vomiting – one or more instances	The remainder of the day and for next one school day and asymptomatic before resuming school
Pink eye, conjunctivitis, watery eyes, mucus in the eyes, itchy eyes, redness in the eyes	One full school day after treatment has begun
Strep throat: sore throat, white patches on throat and tonsils	Child must be fever free for one school day, one full day of antibiotics, and pain free
Earache or ear infection	The remainder of the day, the following school day, and treated for at least 24 hours
Stomachache/abdominal pain/severe pain that hinders the child's ability to participate	Excluded until pain discontinues
Bronchitis	Excluded until child has no trouble breathing, treated with antibiotics for at least 2 days, and child can fully participate
Chicken Pox	6 days after onset of rash, all lesions must be crusted over and dry
Coxsackievirus (hand, foot, and mouth disease): fever, sore throat, diarrhea, blisters	The remainder of the day, the following one school day, and no new blisters appearing
Croup: strong-cough, fever, difficult or rapid breathing	The remainder of the day, following two school days, no trouble breathing, able to fully participate
Fifth disease: headache, body ache, fever, sore throat, red rash on body and face	The remainder of the day, the following one school day and fever free for 24 hours
Impetigo: red, oozing blister-like pimples on the face or skin	The remainder of the day, the following one school day and no new blisters appearing

Lice, Scabies	The remainder of the day, the following school day, 24 hours after treatment, and all nits are removed (must return with a doctor's note for all cases)
Measles	6 days after onset of rash and fever free for at least 1 day
Mumps	9 days after onset of swelling and fever free for at least 1 day
Scarlett fever or other rash	The remainder of the day, the following school day, rash is faded, condition is treated, and fever free for at least one school day
Ringworm: reddish, circular patches with raised edges and central scaling	The remainder of the day, the following school day, and no new patches appearing
Roseola	The remainder of the day and the following school day
Thrush: white patches in the mouth	The remainder of the day, the following school day, and treated for at least 24 hours
Tuberculosis	Treated and fever free for at least one school day and a note from a health official stating that child is not contagious
Lethargy or Stiff neck	The remainder of the day, the following one school day
COVID-19 positive test for either student or the parent	The remainder of the day, next five days and return only with negative Covid pcr test
Please also remember that a child's immunizations must be updated annually including covid vaccine and stored in their file at the school.	

If a child is dismissed because of any of the previously listed illnesses, a doctor's note will not override the adherence to the listed exclusion periods. If a child has a reoccurring disorder, a doctor's note must be submitted once diagnosed (the child may still be sent home). If a parent fails to comply with this policy or does not pick up a child who is sick, enrollment will be terminated.

### **Medication**

Any medication to be administered by Learning Ladders staff must be accompanied by a signed medication authorization form, signed note from the doctor, and actual prescription label. Medications can only be administered if provided in the original medication container that includes the child's name, medicine name, doctor's directed dosage and frequency, date, and expiration date. The medication must be given directly to the school administration and is not to be the responsibility of the child or class teachers. Over the counter medications will only be provided at scheduled times and only with a doctor's note. Please never leave medication in your child's lunch box or on a desk/table for a Team Member to retrieve. If the child is taking a medication for the very first time, we ask that the first dose be given to the child while they are at home and under the direct supervision of their parent(s) in case the child has an allergic reaction or other adverse reaction to the medicine.

### **Emergency Medication**

While it is the policy of Learning Ladders to never administer any medications without a doctor's note, there are times when emergencies arise that necessitate immediate action. This appointment must be made just prior to the site Director leaving the facility or by telephone in the event of an unexpected absence. Every attempt will be made to contact the parent(s) prior to the child being given either one of the medications. In every case, parents will be given written notice of what medication was given, symptoms, time medication was administered, and by whom it was administered. Label directions will be followed for each medication. If you do not want us to administer these medications to your child, please send a written note to the school for placement in your child's folder.

## **Incident Report**

In the case of a student being hurt at school, parent will receive a notification describing the incident and the following steps that will need to take. At the parent's arrival to the school, the parent will receive an incident report describing the incident and requiring the signatures of the Director, Teacher, and Parent.

## **Vaccinations**

All students are required to show proof of childhood vaccinations. For religious and medical exemptions, the proper paperwork must be given to the school as vaccinations are a state health requirement. All students under the age of 5 years old are required to receive a yearly Flu vaccine. Students cannot return to school after receiving vaccination due to possible delayed reactions.

## **Allergies**

All nuts and any items containing nuts, nut oil, or nut butter/milk are strictly prohibited from the school. Students with allergies to nut products could be adversely affected by the presence of such food and it is every parent's responsibility to ensure that these children are not exposed to such a risk. Please inform the school administration (prior to enrollment) if your child has any food allergies or other serious allergies. Parents are required to provide an allergy action plan signed by the doctor specifying detailed instructions in case of an allergic reaction. Staff are trained in administering EpiPen and in following necessary procedures highlighted in your child's Allergy Action Plan. Students who are being tested for allergies will not be allowed back to school on the test date due to any possible delayed reaction.

Many families like to celebrate their child's birthday with the class by bringing in special cupcakes or other treats. For safety reasons, we cannot allow any homemade food or beverages to enter the classroom. We are only able to serve children store-bought food that is sealed in its original packaging with labels.

## **Covid Guidelines**

**Positive Result:** Any student that test positive for Covid 19 must quarantine for 5 days and must have a doctor clearance to return to school that states they are symptom-free.

**Family Close Contact:** If a family member in a student's home tested positive for Covid. The student will need to quarantine for 5 days and have a negative home covid rapid test result before returning to school.

**School Test to Stay:** If anyone in the classroom tests positive for covid, the remainder of the students who were exposed will need to test every day for 5 days. Students will require a negative home rapid test result to be emailed to the administration to gain entrance to the school for that day plus fill out the health screen form on the Tadpoles app.

**Traveling:** Any student traveling out of the tri-state area must follow covid travel guidelines.

Unvaccinated travelers will need to quarantine for 5 days and a negative home rapid covid result to return to school. Fully vaccinated travelers will need a negative home rapid covid result to return to school. For a student to be consider fully vaccinated is 2 weeks after the last vaccination shot. Please email to school your child completed covid vaccination card.

Please communicate via email to the Administrative Staff of any travel outside of the tri-state area.

## **Challenging Behavior**

Exclusion from the program may also be necessary for any challenging behavior. Challenging behavior is defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children as any behavior that (1) interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play, (2) is harmful to the child, other children, or adults (3) puts a child at high risk for later social problems. Examples of challenging behavior: Physical aggression (hitting, biting, shoving, hitting with toys), relational aggression ("you can't play with us," verbal bullying), tantrums, whining, testing limits, and refusal to follow directions or observe classroom rules.

## Childhood Biting

There are specific guidelines in place to protect the health and well-being of children from biting. When a child is learning how to verbally communicate, often they communicate in many non-verbal ways: Crying, laughing, imitating, and biting. Most areas of non-verbal communication do not pose a potential risk to the well-being of the surrounding children and/or Team Members. Biting, however, does pose a significant risk for the child who bites and the child who is bitten. The following is our biting policy designed for the protection of all:

Biting that results in broken skin:

If a child bites another child and skin is broken, both sets of parents will be notified. The child who has done the biting will be watched closely for the remainder of the day.

1. If the child bites a second time in one day (breaking the skin), then the child will be sent home and may return on their next scheduled day.

Please note: If the child bites again (breaking the skin) after returning to center from the two initial bites described above, then the parents of the child who has done the biting will need to meet with the child's teachers and/or the Director to come up with a behavior plan to help the child learn other non-verbal communication methods.

2. If the child does not bite a second time on that same day (breaking the skin), the child will be monitored to see if biting is a reoccurring behavior or if this was an outlier in their behavior. If seven days of attendance elapses without any further instances of biting (that result in broken skin), then the child will require no further direct monitoring for biting. The "biting guidelines" outlined above will reset and the child will start again at the beginning. If the child does bite again within seven days (breaking the skin), then the parents will be asked to meet with the teachers and/or the Director to develop a behavior management plan for the child. The child does not need to be sent home on this day unless he/she bites twice on this same day (resulting in broken skin).
3. If the team and the parents are working together on a behavior management plan and the child bites for a third time (breaking the skin), then the parents will again be asked to meet with the team to discuss modifications to the plan. If the child bites a fourth time (breaking the skin), he/she will be dis-enrolled from the program.

Biting that does not result in broken skin:

For a child who habitually bites (biting daily or at least three times per week) without breaking the skin, Team Members will closely monitor this child and provide an Incident Report to both the child doing the biting and the child being bitten (after each instance of biting). After the child has accumulated ten Incident Reports of biting another child, the parents will be called, and a meeting will be held to develop a plan to help the child learn other non-verbal skills. If the child continues to bite (resulting in five additional Incident Reports of biting) after developing a plan of positive reinforcement to end the biting, the child will be dis-enrolled from the program.

If biting ceases for a six-month period, the child's record will be internally cleared, and prior instances of biting will not be taken into account when abiding by the above guidelines. All instances of biting are detailed in Incident Reports and placed in child's folder

## GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Positive discipline *is* a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the-rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult. Methods of positive discipline shall be consistent with the age and developmental needs of the children, and lead to the ability to develop and maintain self-control.

Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

### You can use positive discipline by planning ahead:

1. Anticipate and eliminate potential problems. Have a few consistent, clear rules that are explained to children and understood by adults.
2. Have a well-planned daily schedule. Plan for ample elements of fun and humor.
3. Include some group decision-making. Provide time and space for each child to be alone.
4. Make it possible for each child to feel he/she has had some positive impact on the group.
5. Provide the structure and support children need to resolve their differences.
6. Share ownership and responsibility with the children. Talk about our room, our toys.

### You can use positive discipline by intervening when necessary:

1. Re-direct to a new activity to change the focus of a child's behavior.
2. Provide individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation.
3. Use time out — by removing a child for a few minutes from the area or activity so that he/she may gain self-control. (One minute for each year of the child's age is a good rule of thumb).
4. Divert the child and remove from the area of conflict.
5. Provide alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings.
6. Point out natural or logical consequences of children's behavior.
7. Offer a choice only if there are two acceptable options.
8. Criticize the behavior, not the child. Don't say "bad boy" or "bad girl" Instead you might say "That is not allowed here."

### You can use positive discipline by showing love and encouragement

1. Catch the child being good. Respond to and reinforce positive behavior; acknowledge or praise to let the child know you approve of what he/she is doing.
2. Provide positive reinforcement through rewards for good behavior.
3. Use encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism.
4. Overlook small annoyances, and deliberately ignore provocations.
5. Give hugs and caring to every child every day, appreciate the child's point of view.
6. Love, but don't confuse love with license.

### Positive Discipline is NOT:

1. Disciplining a child for failing to eat or sleep or for soiling themselves.
2. Hitting, shaking or any other form of corporal punishment.
3. Using abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment of children.
4. Engaging in or inflicting any form of child abuse and/ or neglect.
5. Withholding food, emotional responses, stimulation or opportunities for rest or sleep
6. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for an inappropriately long period of time.

Positive discipline takes time, patience, repetition and the willingness to change the way you deal with children. But it's worth *it*, because positive discipline works

## EXPULSION POLICY

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

### Immediate Causes for Expulsion

- ✓ The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself
- ✓ Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- ✓ Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

### Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion

- ✓ Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- ✓ Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- ✓ Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- ✓ Verbal abuse to staff.
- ✓ Other (explanation provided at the time of expulsion)

### Child's Actions for Expulsion

- ✓ Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- ✓ Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outbursts.
- ✓ Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- ✓ Excessive biting.
- ✓ Other (explanation provided at the time of expulsion).

### Schedule of Expulsion

- ✓ If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised- verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/ guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center.
- ✓ The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period.
- ✓ The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center.
- ✓ The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice, depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety).
- ✓ Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

### A child will not be Expelled

- ✓ If a child's parent(s):
  - Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
  - Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
  - Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
  - Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other child care arrangement.

### Proactive Actions that can be taken in order to prevent Expulsion.

- ✓ Try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- ✓ Reassess classroom environment, appropriate of activities, supervision.
- ✓ Always use positive methods and language while disciplining children and praise appropriate behaviors.
- ✓ Consistently apply consequences for rules.
- ✓ Give the child verbal warnings and time to regain control.
- ✓ Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- ✓ Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- ✓ Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- ✓ The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- ✓ The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- ✓ Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises.



**Department of Children and Families  
Office of Licensing**

**INFORMATION TO PARENTS**

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 10:122), every licensed childcare center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other childcare matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review, if you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may secure a copy of the Manual of Requirements by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJ Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the Office of Licensing's Inspection/violation Reports on the center, which are issued after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the Office's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Office for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member and without disrupting the class. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required to periodically review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, make the list accessible to staff and parents, and ensure that items on the list are not at the center. The list is available at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the DLPS, DCA, toll-free at 1(800) 242-5846.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Child Abuse Hotline, toll free at 1 (877) NJ ABUSE. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to [www.ni.gov/dcf](http://www.ni.gov/dcf) and select Publications.

## OFFICE OF LICENSING INFORMATION TO PARENTS DOCUMENT

Dear Parent

In keeping with New Jersey's child care center licensing requirements, we are obligated to provide you, as the parent of a child enrolled at our center, with this informational statement. The statement highlights, among other things: your right to visit and observe our center at any time without having to secure prior permission; the center's obligation to be licensed and to comply with licensing standards; and the obligation of all citizens to report suspected child abuse/neglect/exploitation to the State's DHS Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline Toll Free at 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873).

Please read this statement carefully and, if you have any questions, feel free to contact at [swati@learningladdersnj.com](mailto:swati@learningladdersnj.com)

Please complete and return this portion to the center. (Please print)

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and received a copy of the Information to Parents document prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing in the Department of Human Serv

**BLANKET PERMISSION FOR WALKING TRIPS**

I hereby give permission for my child (name), \_\_\_\_\_

to participate in walking trips in the neighborhood around (school), \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the walking route includes no safety hazards and that the walks will not involve entrance into any place other than the Children's Colgate Park /Morris Canal Park/Provost Square.

Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, WAIVER, AND INDEMNITY FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

I am aware that the risks of exposure to communicable or infectious diseases such as measles and the COVID-19 corona virus are on the rise, and despite safety measures, the risks of infection cannot be eliminated whenever people interact.

In consideration of my child being allowed to attend the Learning Ladders ("School") and to participate in School events and activities, and myself and my family having access to the School, each of the undersigned (jointly and severally "I") acknowledges, appreciates, and agrees that:

- 1) I, my family members who may enter the school, and my child have all recommended vaccines and boosters as recommended to protect against communicable diseases.
- 2) Attendance or participation in any interaction with others, including attendance at School and participation in School events and activities, of necessity includes possible exposure to and illness from infectious diseases (including but not limited to influenza, measles, and corona virus known as COVID-19). While adherence to the School rules and personal discipline may reduce this risk, that exposure, illness or death, are impossible to avoid;
- 3) I acknowledge that my child's attendance at the school – involving interaction with other children and their teachers, or parents, of necessity involves the risk of contracting communicable illness from others. If I observe any unusual or significant hazard during my attendance or participation, I will remove myself and my child from the situation and bring such to the attention of nearest school administration immediately.
- 4) As it relates to exposure to a communicable disease, including but not limited to influenza, measles, or COVID 19, I, for myself (and on behalf of my children family attending the school or any school function), as well as my heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY RELEASE, INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS, AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE the School, their officers, officials, agents, and or employees, other students and their family members ("RELEASEES"), with respect to any and all illness, disability, death, or any other illness or injury, or loss or damage to person or property, and against any and all claims, demands, suits, judgments, losses or expenses of any nature whatsoever (including, without limitation, attorney's fees, costs and disbursements) , WHETHER SUCH EXPOSURE OR INFECTION ARISES DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE, to the fullest extent permitted by law.
- 5) I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, both known and unknown, and assume full responsibility for my attendance or that of my children or family at School and attendance or participation in School events and activities.
- 6) This is to further certify that I, as parent / guardian, with legal responsibility for the student named below, have read and understand this waiver, release, and indemnity, including the risks of attendance and participation in events and activities and his/her personal responsibilities for adhering to the rules and regulations for protection against communicable diseases. On behalf of my child/ward understands I accept these risks and responsibilities. I for myself, my spouse, and child/ward do consent and agree to his/her release provided above for all the Releasees and myself, my spouse, and child/ward do release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees for any and all liabilities incident to my minor.
- 7) WE HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND IF FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY.
- 8) Each of the undersigned understand that the School is relying on the accuracy of the above statements.

EACH PARENT MUST SIGN BELOW

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated Signed: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

**I have read and understand the Parent Handbook including the Information to Parents Document, Policy on the Release of Children, Positive Guidance, Policy on Methods of Parental Notification, Policy on Communicable Disease Management, Policy on Toilet Training, Waiver, Policy on the Use of Technology-Social Media and Tuition Structure.**

(Please sign and return this form)

Please sign below if you have read, understand, and agree with this Parent Handbook. Signing below indicates that you agree to comply with all policies, procedures, charges, and responsibilities both financial and other as mandated by the Learning Ladders Parent Handbook. This Parent Handbook is self-extending annually and subject to changes and revisions at any time.

In signing below, I also acknowledge that Learning Ladders has gone through significant financial and temporal expense in recruiting and training its personnel. I acknowledge that I will not, directly or indirectly induce an employee of Learning Ladders to leave the company, and will not engage the services of anyone who works or had worked at Learning Ladders.

_____	_____	_____
<b>Parent Print Name</b>	<b>Parent Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	_____	_____
<b>Parent Print Name</b>	<b>Parent Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

Our Sincerest Thanks

Thank you for being a member of Learning Ladders and for taking the time to carefully read through this Parent Handbook. Remember, you are encouraged to request new versions of this Handbook as often as needed as there will be updates and changes made throughout time. Always keep a copy accessible so you can quickly check policies and get the very most out of your family's experience with our school, our teachers, and our program. Of course, if you have any questions about our Parent Handbook or if you need any additional clarification about any of our policies, please see the Director at any time. Your family is important to us and we are always happy to answer your questions. (Please sign and return only the signature pages so you can retain this Parent Handbook for your future reference)