

Parent Handbook



Learning Ladders *School of Excellence*

Our Early Education Center

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Welcome to Our School

The Parent Handbook

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 also 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 three 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 request a new Parent Handbook periodically.

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 our management or Director. We are always happy to answer your questions, so please see us at anytime.

The Program Philosophy

Education

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.

From the daily report parents receive every single day about their child's activities to our extensive 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 Child Portfolio Program provides an in-depth system that charts the long-term progress of each child. Through this process, teachers record observations on each child in their classroom, conduct an assessment, and then hold parent-teacher conferences regularly. 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.

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 and the State's Licensing Agency.

A Safe Learning Environment

A Unique Monitoring System That Allows View into Class at Any Time Throughout the Day

The camera system at Learning Ladders allows administration to secure virtual access to instantly see the children, our teachers, and our facility at any time during the day. Other unique safety measures include secure door code access, advanced background checks on each Team Member beyond state requirements, and full CPR and First Aid training for our Team Members (instead of training just one teacher in CPR and First Aid as required by state licensing). Team Members are also required to undergo the complete employment application process periodically which includes medical reviews and extensive background checks.

Policies and Procedures

This next section is to ensure that all children are able to enjoy an efficient and well-organized day of learning and fun! We hope these guidelines help you get the most out of your family's time at Learning Ladders. Please remember to check this section frequently throughout your time with us and feel free to request a new copy of this Parent Handbook as policies may be updated over time.

Attendance and Tuition

The following are some standard rules regarding attendance and payment. For the safety of all children, the child must be brought directly into the classroom and the teacher must be told that he/she has arrived so the arrival can be recorded on the classroom attendance sheet. The parent must also sign the child in upon arrival and sign the child out upon leaving the facility using the sign in system in the lobby. Children are expected to be in class no later than 15 minutes of their expected arrival time. 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 are not permitted because of space restrictions. If space is available, we are happy to make every effort to accommodate your need in accordance with the fee schedule listed in the tuition guide. If a child is expected to be absent or if there will be a different person responsible for dropping your child off for the day, we ask that the parent kindly notify the Director 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 has to be enrolled in the program full or part time. 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.

Payment Procedures

A tuition advance equaling to one month of tuition is due via check at the time of registration after the admission offer have been made and accepted. This advance is applied to student's last month with the school. Registration Fee, Annual Material Fee, Security Deposit and Tuition once paid is non-refundable. 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, pandemic, natural disasters, partial months, vacations, absences or mid-year departures.**

Late Payment

Please remember that tuition is due by the 1st of each month. Any tuition that is not deposited by this date will be considered late and will be subject to a \$100 late fee. If payment is not received by the 10th 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.

Changes in Payment

Please remember that tuition is due regardless of child absence, holidays, snow days, or other school's closings. In the event you need to alter your child's schedule of attendance, the Director 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. Please also familiarize yourself with the additional fees for dropping off your child early or picking him/her up late (note: in the event that a child is left for longer than regular closing hours, a Team Member will make every attempt to contact the identified emergency contacts until it is necessary to contact the proper authorities as mandated by our state licensing). For part time attendees, the addition or reconfiguration of days of attendance will incur charges in addition to the regular tuition even if the child is absent on the regularly contracted days of attendance. Please adhere to the schedule you choose for your child to avoid additional costs. Tuition changes upon transition to next class and it is the parent's responsibility to request (in writing) a permanent reduction in tuition because of the advancement to another classroom. Retroactive reimbursements for overcharges because of classroom advancements or other fee cannot be granted.

Enrollment

To end your child's enrollment at Learning Ladders, a one (1) full calendar month prior written notice in writing must be given to the Director. Please note that tuition and any other fee is not pro-rated for mid-month or mid-year start or withdrawal or non-start. Tuition and other fees will remain the responsibility of the parent 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. Security deposit equivalent to one month tuition is applied towards last month of attendance if suitable withdrawal notice is given. 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.

Web Cameras and Photographs

Learning Ladders offers the 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 web site. Additionally, enrollment also signifies your agreement that teachers may take photographs of your child for use within the school for projects or personal property identification or informational purposes or to be displayed on school's website.

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.

Parents Are Always Welcome

Learning Ladders offers an open-door policy inviting all parents to visit the center at any time to meet the director/management. For the safety of our children, only parents of enrolled children are permitted access to our facility. Teachers are always available to meet with you to discuss the progress of your child and you may also schedule parent and teacher meetings to speak with your child's individual teacher as often as needed. Parents can come in 15 mins before the pick-up time to talk to the teacher and visit the room. Our Team Members are encouraged to work with families to build strong relationships between each family and our school. Our school welcomes input from families on their background and cultural interests. Parents can be with the child in room for up to 20 mins each day for the first week in mornings to ease the transition. Open Door Policy is subject to change by DCF or DoH or CDC.

Educational Equipment and Toys

All toys and learning equipment are purchased with our primary goal in mind – 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.

Emergency Fire Drills

As an important component of our state licensing, Learning Ladders is required to conduct a certain number of fire drills each year. These exercises help to ensure preparedness in the event of a fire and hence at the time of drill kids can be without footwear and/or appropriate outerwear. If the weather permits, fire drills are held monthly to practice evacuation techniques and strategy.

Daily Reports and Incident Reports

Your child's teacher will provide you with a Daily Report that highlights your child's activities for the day. In addition to receiving a Daily Report on your child's activities, fun, and learning experiences, there is also an Incident Report that is given when a child is involved in an injury or when a child harms another child. This report is completed by the present teacher, given to the Director, and then signed by the parent. This report is then filed in the child's folder.

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.

What to Bring For An Exciting Day

All children will learn and have fun using our vast collection of toys and developmental tools. There are just a few things that each child must bring from home. Please be sure to put your child's name on all items and remember that we are 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 children should bring:</u>	<u>Extra items that young toddlers and infants should bring:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Spare change of clothing to be stored in the classroom (change with each season)▪ Sleeping sheet and blanket▪ List of allergies (for Team Members to post)▪ Sun block (15 SPF minimum), a hat, and insect repellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Formula and/or baby food▪ Bottles, pacifiers, and young child cups▪ Diapers, wipes, crib sheet, and blanket▪ Child's sleeping and feeding schedule▪ 2-3 sets of clothes and bibs

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 facility's environment.

Note about sun block: To protect against heat and sun burn, we provide a shaded area within the playground. On days when children 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.

End Of The Day

Registered parents/guardians and the authorized pick-up person(s) of enrolled children are the only people allowed to pick-up a child. Each parent/guardian is also required to sign-out their child using the lobby computer **and/or** sign-out sheet.

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 Team Member must 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) The bottle is to be placed in the child's bin in the refrigerator for storage at a temperature of below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- 5) When removed from the refrigerator, the Team Member must verbally announce the bottle is being removed.
- 6) Team Members must wear gloves when handling bottles containing breast milk and while feeding a child breast milk.
- 7) 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. Team Members are not permitted to use a microwave, boiling water, or any other means to warm a bottle.
- 8) The bottle steamer must be wiped out after usage.
- 9) Breast milk should be gently mixed in the closed bottle. Rigorously shaking breast milk will reduce its nutritional benefits.
- 10) After warming, breast milk and bottle milk can only be kept for one hour and then must be discarded if not consumed.
- 11) Bottle is administered to the child. When administering a bottle to a child (of breast milk or formula), the Team Member must verbally announce the bottle is being given to the child.
- 12) Milk and breast milk must be discarded after the child has finished drinking.
- 13) 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 their infant in the Team Member room or in the classroom. Team Members must follow any instruction given by the child's health care provider when it guides the care of infants. The signed doctor's note with full specifications must be posted in the classroom and also stored in the child's folder.

Relaxation for Your Child

The curriculum at Learning Ladders includes one nap per day for all children (with the exception of the infant program, which has sleep schedules tailored to the individual needs of each infant). Following lunch, all children will have the opportunity for a period of rest and relaxation. After a busy and exciting day of learning and fun, children are able to 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 an audiobook with headphones. For this rest period, please be sure to provide bedding and blanket or sheet that accompanies the child on their first day of each week and returns home at the end of their week to be cleaned.

IMPORTANT: Peanuts and any items containing peanuts, peanut oil, or peanut butter are strictly prohibited from the center. Children with allergies to peanut 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 Director (prior to enrollment) if your child has any food allergies or other serious allergies. Enrollment in an early childhood program setting may not be appropriate for children with severe food allergies because of the unpredictability of the types of foods other children may bring into the school from home. It is in the child's best interest and safety to be placed in an alternative setting that can appropriately accommodate a severe allergy or other special medical condition. For non-severe allergies, this facility's staff is trained to manage such a need and can administer an EpiPen® in time of emergency. Learning Ladders is a peanut-free school to help ensure the safety and well-being of children who could suddenly develop an adverse reaction to peanut products. For any child with special health care concerns or food allergies, the child's health care provider must give the child's head teacher and director an individual care plan.

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.

Outdoor Time and Gross Motor Play for Your Child

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.

Field Trips and Extracurricular Activities

The teachers and the Director 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, story-tellers, and other visitors who provide on-site field trip experiences.

Release Policy

Each child must be signed in and out using the lobby computer/attendance sheet as well as on the teacher's classroom roster. There are absolutely no exceptions to this very important safety rule. This strict rule is for the safety of the children; please never forget to follow it.

Learning Ladders must be provided with the names of emergency contacts and any person(s) granted permission to pick-up a child. Only people over the age of 18 may pick-up a child. To qualify a person for picking up a child, their name, address, telephone number, and clear copy of their license must be provided. 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 for every day another person will pick-up the child. Phone calls 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, Team Members 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 child must stay with a Team Member at all times 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.

Holidays and School Closings

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

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| ➤ New Year's Day | ➤ Labor Day |
| ➤ Martin Luther King Day | ➤ Columbus Day |
| ➤ Presidents Day | ➤ Veterans Day |
| ➤ Easter/ Good Friday | ➤ Thanksgiving Day (including the day after Thanksgiving) |
| ➤ Memorial Day | ➤ Christmas Day including Eve and/or day after |
| ➤ Independence Day | ➤ New Year's Eve and/or day after |



"No one has yet fully realized the wealth of sympathy, kindness, and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true education should be to unlock that treasure."
Emma Goldman



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 might be closed for a week in year for annual maintenance. Please remember that fee and attendance substitutions cannot be made because of center's 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 delay or closing of the school. We will announce this information via email. Please remember that tuition is due regardless of holiday, absence, center closing, or weather cancellation.

Classroom Transitions

As your child grows with us and advances to another program or age group, we ask that you 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 and every 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 of 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).

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 Director's office or another isolated place in an effort 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 any and all costs incurred for medical care and/or transportation provided during the medical emergency. Please also be sure to notify the Director 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.

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 Director for placement in your child's folder.

Dismissal and Exclusion for Illness Learning Ladders reserves the right to dismiss any child if the Team Member determines the child is too ill or presents a risk to others. At the discretion of the Management or Director, 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 2 school days
Uncontained acute diarrhea – one or more instances	The remainder of the day and for next 2 school days and asymptomatic before returning to school
Episode of acute Vomiting – one or more instances	The remainder of the day and for next 2 school days and asymptomatic before returning to 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 2 school days, one full day of antibiotics, and pain free
Ear ache or ear infection	The remainder of the day, the following school day, and treated for at least 24 hours
Stomach ache/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 21 day, 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 two school days, 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 two school days and fever free for 24 hours
Impetigo: red, oozing blister-like pimples on the face or skin	The remainder of the day, the following two school days 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 atleast 1 day
Mumps	9 days after onset of swelling and fever free for atleast 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 2 school days
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 two school days and a note from a health official stating that child is not contagious
Lethargy or Stiff neck	The remainder of the day, the following two school days

Please also remember that a child's immunizations must be updated annually and stored in their file at child care center.

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.

Uncontained Bowel Movements For any uncontained bowel movements, there is a specific procedure that is followed so we can ensure a healthy environment for all children. If a child has diarrhea once and it is accompanied by a fever, the child is immediately sent home. If a child has diarrhea once and does not have a fever, Team Members will continue to monitor the child for additional occurrences or a fever and the parent will also be immediately notified. If the child has a second instance of diarrhea, then the child must be sent home.

Diapers and Toileting Hygiene For children transitioning from diapers to toilet use, we have a simple series of steps we follow to maintain a healthy and sanitary environment for all children. We ask that children have two weeks of dry diapers in the classroom prior to switching to regular underwear (pull-ups are also acceptable in lieu of diapers). It would also be best 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.

Medication Any medication to be administered by Learning Ladders Team Members 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 Director and is not to be the responsibility of the child. 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. The items must be given in person to the Director or Nurse. 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.

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 in 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 elapse 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 in 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.

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.

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.
- ✓ Praise appropriate behaviors.
- ✓ Consistently apply consequences for rules.
- ✓ Give the child verbal warnings.
- ✓ Give the child 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 child care 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 child care 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 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

Sincerely

Swati Sanghi Jain

Learning Ladders

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 Services.

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 or Morris Canal Park.

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, Waiver, Policy on the Use of Technology and 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.

_____	_____	_____
Parent Print Name	Parent Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Parent Print Name	Parent Signature	Date

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)



“Give love and unconditional acceptance to those you encounter, and notice what happens.”
Dr. Wayne Dyer

