



Parents Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to Little Stars Montessori. We sincerely hope this will be the beginning of a rewarding and trusting relationship between your family and us. This handbook is meant to serve as a guide to what you should expect from us. It also details what your responsibilities are. It covers our childcare care philosophies, business policies and expectations. The following pages contain mutually beneficial requirements necessary to ensure no misunderstandings between us.

Philosophy

We believe our most significant contribution to the community and our world is through the proper guidance of the children who are the future's most excellent resource. Our goal is to provide a safe and happy place for children to learn and grow physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. We believe children learn through play and benefit from a structured, flexible schedule. We will offer activities based on the Montessori method of education, which stimulates sensory-motor development, language development, and social interaction. The development of healthy self-esteem is also an important goal. Children will be taught to respect each other, adults, and property.

Daily Procedure

- **Hours of operation**

Little Stars usually is operating from 07:30 am to 05:30 pm Monday through Friday year-round. We may provide nights, weekends, and after school care with flexible hours and extra charges.

- **Check-in/Check-out**

All children must always get checked-in by the adult who brings them to our care. The state of Texas Licensing Laws requires us to have all parents sign in/out their children. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Please note that we will only release your child to the parents or adults who have been designated by parents as an "Authorized Person" on the child's enrollment form. Parents must provide a copy of each authorized person's picture ID, which will be kept in each child's files.

If an authorized person designated by parents is to pick up your child, please notify us in advance. We require that person to provide picture identification.

Important. If a court order keeps one parent away from the child, we must have a copy of the order on file. Otherwise, we cannot prevent the parent from picking up the child.

- **Arrival/Departure**

Since kids in our care need continuous supervision, drop-offs and pick-ups time should be very brief (no more than one minute). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic; kids will be picked-up and dropped-off outside, in front of the door. Parents cannot come inside.

It is expected that some children have difficulty separating from their parents at drop-off time or not wanting to leave when it is time to go home. Children are almost quick to get involved in play or activities as soon as their parents are gone. So, the longer you prolong the departure, the more difficult it could get. This is also a time of testing when two different authority figures are present (the parent and the provider).

Sometimes children will test to see if the rules will apply. It is best to be brief during drop-off and not continue to console your child if they are crying otherwise; it will make things more difficult for you, for your child and for the provider. So, please be very brief during “pick-up/drop-off) transition times and mention essential matters via text message if you absolutely need to provide more information.

Please bring your child to the provider awake & well rested, clean, and fully clothed for the day. **No pajamas or bed clothing will be permitted.** If you arrive after 9:00 am or 12:00 pm, you’ll need to feed your child before dropping them off.

We consider free of charge 30 minutes extra just for parents who only **sometimes** have problems like traffic to pick up their child on time. So, the latest pick-up time is 06:00 pm. We have set a **\$5 per minute** fee for dropping off earlier than 7:30 am and picking up after 5:30 or then our agreed-upon time. This rate has been set to discourage early drop-offs and late pick-ups and to compensate the provider for extra time.

Excessive early drop-off or late pick-up time other than our agreed-upon time may lead to service termination.

- **Extended Hours**

Extended hour of care needs to be discussed and added to the monthly tuition at the time of admission.

- \$120/month for toddlers and \$150/month for infants for 30 minutes of late pick-up

- \$150/month for toddlers and \$170/month for infants for 30 minutes of early drop-off.

- **Meals**

Little Stars Montessori will provide a healthy, nutritious breakfast, lunch and mid-afternoon snack everyday based on our meal menu. We require all children to participate in our program to attend all meals provided. Children are encouraged to try new foods but may refuse what they do not want to eat. Withholding food is never used as a form of discipline. We preserve the right to substitute any menu items if the listed item is unavailable.

- Breakfast is between 8:30 – 9:00 am (Children must arrive by 8:15 am to have breakfast)
- Lunch is between 11:30 am to 12:00 pm
- Afternoon snack 3:30 – 4:00 pm

*If you bring in your child after the specified time above, please feed your child before you drop them off.

Parents need to provide formula/breast milk and baby foods and snacks from 8 months of age to 12 months. Please bring breast milk in 3 separate bottles in a bottle bag for the day. If using infant formula, you get 3 bottles of water and a canister of formula to leave here. You may also choose to bring 3 empty bottles for the day.

Food Allergy

If your child is allergic to any foods, you must inform the provider. We strongly urge you to monitor our menus for possible reactive meals. The menu does not include tree nuts or peanuts to prevent the possibility of allergic reactions.

If we have a child in our care with a food allergy, bringing food from outside **will not be allowed** except for baby food or if you have a religious excuse (as long as it is vegetarian food and nut free). Outside food may contain an ingredient that another child in our care is allergic to. If a portion of the outside food is spilled or dropped and eaten or ingested by another child, we could have a severely life-threatening situation on our hands.

Nap time

The toddlers typically nap at 1:00 pm after lunch and usually sleep till 3:00 pm or later. Please schedule doctor's appointments for early pick up before noon or after 3:30 pm. Parents will need to provide mat naps for their children. Mat naps will be sent home on Friday of each week and need to be washed and returned on following Monday.

Open Door Policy

We welcome you to visit your child throughout the day, but we need to be informed in advance and we ask you not to disturb children during naptime (1-3 pm). Due to COVID-19 pandemic; we cannot let you come inside the facility but you can meet with your child outside (front or back yard). If it is necessary that you pick-up or drop off your child during nap time, please let us know in advance. Please knock and not ring the bell during nap time.

Discipline

An abundance of love, kindness, and encouragement is what all children need and deserve. Children can never suffer from too much positive reinforcement and support. No child will ever be “spanked” or physically reprimanded at Little Stars Montessori. Age- appropriate disciplinary actions will be introduced, such as “No-No”, “Redirection”, and “Thinking chair”. The “Thinking chair” session is age appropriate.

- 90 seconds for 18 months
- 120 seconds for 24 months
- 180 seconds for 36 month, etc..

NOTE

Following are the **grounds for termination** of our services:

Including but not limited to biting, scratching, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, pulling hair, spitting, inconsolable crying all day, climbing/jumping on furniture, destruction of property, lack of respect from parents, non-payment of tuition or penalties, and any action which compromises the health and well-being of another child or us (Little Stars Montessori staff).

Fire Safety and Emergency Practices

Emergency Preparedness

- **Evacuation, relocation, and sheltering/lock-down of children, including:**
 - In an emergency evacuation or relocation of the children the first responsibility is to move them to a designated safe area, in this case would be the bathroom in the hallway across from the children’s room.
- **Alternate shelter**
 - Nearest Elementary school (Lakeview Elementary School).
 - Address: 1800 Waterside Dr, Little Elm, TX 75068
 - Phone: (972) 947-9454

- **In case of fire**, if the fire is in the back of the house, children will be moved out of the house from the front door. If the fire is in the front of the house, children will be moved out from the backyard to the outside of the building.

Caregiver(s) will make sure all children are accounted for by counting them as the move from one location to another.

- **Communication:**

- Caregiver's number (214) 527-6305
- Local authority emergency, Medical services, parents and DFPS phone numbers are all posted on the bulletin board as well as saved on all employees and caregivers cell phones.

- **Evacuation and relocation with essential documentation:**

- A folder is prepared with the following documents:
 - Parent and emergency contact information for each child
 - Children under the age of 2 and infants will be carried to a safe location by a caregiver
 - Authorization for emergency care for each child in care.
 - The attendance record information for children in care at the time of emergency.
 - During the emergency situations in order to keep the children calm, caregiver(s) will be singing songs with them and/or play games such as counting numbers, etc...
 - Children will reunify with their parents once the evacuation, relocation, sheltering/lockdown has been lifted at the location or alternate location whichever is the case at the time of emergency.

Supplies Needed

Please bring:

- Change of cloths
- Stopper socks
- Sippy cu
- Nap Mat
- Disposable diapers

- Box of wipes
- Any Ointments or rash cream where it applies or anything else your child may need during the day.

NOTE: *All items must be labeled with your child's name. To have a healthy and clean environment; no one is allowed wearing shoes inside our childcare. All walking children must bring two stopper socks for inside use and bring sneakers for outside. Parents must wear shoe covers to enter the childcare facility.*

Communication

Open communication between the parents and provider is crucial in satisfying the needs of everyone involved. We like to be sure that we can openly share any concerns or questions that may arise. We welcome questions, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for your child. Please feel free to contact us to discuss any matter of importance via email. We cannot discuss matters during our operations hours as children in our care require our undivided attention.

Toys

Bringing toys from home is not allowed. Children can bring things only on some Fridays when we have "Show and Tell". Please encourage your child to bring ideas from the nature, a particular book, or a photograph from a trip we asked for.

Mission Statement

We are dedicated to provide a loving, learning, and safe environment. Each child's intellectual, social, and developmental potential can be realized in a positive, stimulating, and creative manner consistent with effective teaching practices based on the Montessori methods, emphasizing love & laughter.

Program Goals

We work on basic shapes, numbers, colors, ABCs, lacing, puzzles, and memorization of familiar songs, books and dancing. We also work on manners such as "Please", "Thank you", and sharing while we bond with one another and build strong relationships. Children will spend time outdoors when weather permits as well as indoors. `

Trial Period

There is a 2-week trial period beginning on your child's first day of care. The trial period has been established ensure your child is adjusting to he new environment and everything is going smoothly with no issues. If the new environment does not work out for either party, both parties agree to give a 2-week notice of removing the child from our childcare.

Holidays & Vacation

We will be closed on all calendar holidays (paid holidays). New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Good Friday & Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Christmas Day.

The following holidays are considered **paid holidays**: The day before Thanksgiving and black Friday, and from the day before Christmas Eve to the day after New Year's Day observed.

We currently take a one to two weeks **paid** vacation per year. We will give a 1-month notice and you'll need to arrange alternative care during those times.

Admission Procedure

There are few forms that must be completed before assuming the responsibility of caring for your child. You are required to keep us informed of any contact information and any other pertinent information on these forms as they arise; such as immunization records. A new set of forms must be filled out once a year. We expect your child to start on the designated date. Please make sure of your child's start date when signing the necessary enrollment package paperwork.

We do not charge registration and enrollment fees at the time of enrollment if we have a child on the list for **one year**. If a family changes their mind for whatever reason after the 2-week trial period or before one year anniversary, we lose the potential spot to have another child registered. For this reason, the registration and enrollment fees need to be paid at the time of 30-day notice. Otherwise, the **security deposit will not be refunded**. On the other hand; if we are unable to provide care for the child within the 2-week trial or before one year is over, we will provide you with a 2-week notice to remove your child from our care and your security deposit will be refunded.

The Security Deposit and the first month tuition is due at the time of enrollment. Security deposit will be refunded on the last day after the one year and upon receipt of 30-day notice. Without a 30-day notice security deposit is not refundable.

Tuition for each month is due on the 27th of the previous month. Biweekly payments are due on the 14th and 27th of each month.

A \$30 late fee per day will be charged if the monthly tuition fee is received after the due date. A \$30 NSF fee will be charged for all returned checks.

Failure to pay extra charges such as early drop off, late pick-up, late payment, NSF fee, etc... will be charged to the Security Deposit. There is a 1-week period to maintain the \$400 balance of Security Deposit. Not maintaining the Security Deposit balance after 1-week period could result in termination of services.

There is no prorating or tuition reduction for early withdrawals or absence for holidays, family vacation, illnesses and emergency closing. Your child's tuition keeps their spot in our

childcare whether they are here or ill or on vacation. Tuition is due on or before the 27th as mentioned above.

Little Stars Montessori reserves the right to change policies and procedures, fees & other charges with a 30-day prior notice. All past due payments will be reported to a Delinquent Childcare Collection Agency after 30 days.

Illness

The DFPS has specific Illness policy guidelines. We will adhere to these policies:

- If a child develops symptoms as cold/flu
- 99+ F temperature
- Strep throat
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash, Pink Eye, Mumps, Chicken Pox, or head lice.

In any of the forementioned cases above the (parent)s will be notified and arrangement should be made for the child to be picked up within 30 minutes. An ill child cannot return to school unless she/he has been **symptom free for 72 hours** without medication and a doctor's note. If the illness is severe, necessary medical steps will be taken in an emergency and 911 will be dialed at the child's parents' expense.

Allergies

We have chosen to provide a nut-free environment. Children will not be permitted to eat peanut butter or any nut products while at school in our care. We will also comply with your wishes regarding restrictions due to religious reasons. Children with specific diet restriction must bring a note from home which will always be kept in the child's folder.

Medicine Policies

We recognize that medication administration is an essential part of maintaining your child's overall state of welfare and health. We will administer prescription and non-prescription (OTC) medications according to the following requirements:

- Form "Authorization for Dispensing Medication" must be filled and signed by parents
- All medications must be in their original containers.
 - For prescription medications the pharmacy label with the child's name and physician's name, the prescription #, date prescribed, dosage, and frequency must be current and legible.

- Non-prescription medications will only be administered with a note from your child's pediatrician stating the medication's specific name, dosage and frequency.
- If your child has received immunization shots and your child's physician has advised you to administer "Tylenol" at your discretion, you will need to apply it at home before dropping him/her off.
- If your child needs a prescribed medication such as an antibiotic, please have your child's physician prescribe a medication administered twice a day which should be given before and after attending childcare.

Preparing Infants (0-24 month) for New Environment

Introducing a breastfeeding infant to bottle feeding can be exceedingly tricky and time consuming. An infant who is breastfeeding must be introduced to and feeding from a bottle at least two weeks before starting at our childcare.

Hitting, Biting, or any other Misbehavior

If a child bites, hits or pushes another child, based on the severity both parents will be notified immediately, and proper steps will be taken to comfort and care for the victim. No parents want their child to bite or to be bitten. Biting can cause irreversible damage. We will work together and try to resolve such problems and take action if needed for welfare and health of children in our care. If this type of misbehaviors continues to re-occur, **Little Stars Montessori** a decision to terminate service may be necessary.

Licensing Information

Little Stars Montessori is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). The Certificate of licensing and our most recent licensing inspection and our most recent inspection report are available for review. You are welcome and encouraged to review The Minimum Standards, and inspection report for home childcare on the DFPS website: www.dfps.state.tx.us You may also contact the local licensing office at 800-582-6036 if needed.

Child Abuse & Neglect

Texas law on child abuse and neglect requires suspected child abuse or neglect to be reported to the Texas Department of Protective & Regulatory Services at www.dfps.state.tx.us or 800-252-5400

Your child's growth and happiness is significant to us and their happiness is our priority. It is of the outmost importance that parents and their children feel comfortable while in our home childcare. We look forward to our new relationship and getting to bond with your child over the next year.