
The Learning Tree

Family Handbook

[2023] School Year

Revised [12/26/2022]

The Learning Tree

WELCOME

Dear Family,

We are so happy to have your child as a part of The Learning Tree Group. Please become familiar with the following policies as they are an imperative part of your child's success. While your child is here, they will work toward their developmental goals. We implement the Learning Beyond Curriculum, and Tennessee State Standards. Your child will be working toward mastering their own social growth and developmental learning areas.

Thank you for choosing The Learning Tree. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

The Learning Tree
595 Airport Rd
615-230-8222
learningtreegallatin@gmail.com

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ABOUT Us

Philosophy

We believe children learn best when provided with meaningful, hands-on play experiences that are both enjoyable and encourage growth. Our curriculum covers a wide array of domains that allow children to be actively involved in learning and completely engaged in their environment. Teachers help to encourage growth by creating an environment in which children are given opportunities to make choices and gain independence. The experiences provided are not only age and developmentally appropriate, but are also interesting to the children.

We believe each child develops at their own pace, and our environment is set up to encourage each child's individual success. Children are free to explore classroom centers and interact with materials that interest them. Our classroom centers are set up to encourage play, as play is an important aspect in the development of active learning. Just like the experiences provided, materials used are developmentally appropriate and interesting to the children.

We believe parents are a child's first teacher and value the relationships created between families, communities, children, and staff. Building relationships with families is the key to encouraging a child's growth and development. Parents are an integral part of their child's success in the classroom and are encouraged to be involved in our program, whether it be volunteering in our classrooms, sharing their experiences, or serving on our Parent Advisory Board.

We believe the relationships created provide staff with the ability to incorporate each child's culture into the classroom setting, bridging the gap between the classroom and community. We understand children are influenced by their family's customs, beliefs, and language. By allowing a safe space for the sharing of cultural backgrounds, children develop a sense of who they are.

Mission

To provide a Safe and Educational environment to all children regardless of their race, religion, or creed. We are here to love, protect, and respect all children.

Certification

TECTA certified

3 STAR CENTER

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided from 5:30 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.

Holidays and Staff Development

We are closed for all state holidays. A Holiday Schedule is included at the end of the Parent packet.

Additionally, the State allots us two paid days per year to close for Staff Development. These dates are subject to change on a yearly basis. These dates are included on the Holiday Schedule.

Holiday Schedules are updated on an annual basis and will be sent out at the beginning of the year.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$50 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

There is also a non-refundable deposit of the first week's tuition in order to hold any openings.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 months to 5 years of age.

Our process for introducing children to our program is:

We start with a tour of the facility. Families are encouraged to bring their child(ren) to spend time with teachers and other children in the classroom environment. During this time, information regarding the program is provided to families. Families are encouraged to ask questions and provide information about their child(ren), cultural beliefs, and upbringing.

The Learning Tree allows prospective parents to have one free morning to observe the environment and atmosphere of the classroom. This morning consists of 4 hours with the child in the classroom. Parents must be present during this time.

Inclusion

The Learning Tree believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At The Learning Tree, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification
Teacher	TECTA 24 hours of annual training pertaining to their age group

Caregivers participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

Out of Hours Babysitting

We do not provide a babysitting service outside our normal operating hours.

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. Communication from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Daily communication is provided through the ProCare app.

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. Newsletters will be sent out via ProCare.

Email. Please provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Parent Resource Table. Our parent resource table provides a learning environment for parents to share opinions, ideas and experiences and increase their understanding of learning and development.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur three times a year or as needed. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Facebook. We will use Facebook to share events happening within the center. We take the privacy of our children very seriously, and will only share photos of children for whom we have received permission.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Families are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

The Learning Tree uses the Tennessee Early Learning Development Standards and Learning Beyond. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lessons plans posted in each classroom.

Transition

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

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

Television Time

Our normal daily routine does not include television watching, but from time-to-time, we may record a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. Television consumption will not be longer than one hour and the program will be screened prior to showing. Programs will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

Rest Time

After lunch, all children participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to

working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

The Learning Tree is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at The Learning Tree has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

When a child is exhibiting behavior that is disruptive the following guidance will take place.

1. Verbal Redirection
2. If the behavior continues the first time out will be implemented, for children over the age of 3 years.
3. If the behavior continues the second timeout will be implemented, for children over the age of 3 years.
4. The third time, the child's parent will be called and a meeting to set up a behavior plan will be scheduled.

If the behavior becomes chronic and endangers the child, teacher, and others, the director may ask the family to re-evaluate the child's readiness and ask the family to withdraw.

The Learning Tree has the right to terminate a child for any reason deemed necessary, including biting.

The Learning Tree has the right to terminate a child for unreasonable parental behavior.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.
- Biting

TUITION AND FEES

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

Payments can be made via check, money order, or ProCare using a debit/credit card or ACH payment.

Credit/Debit Card Fees

When paying through ProCare with a credit or debit card, an additional fee will be assessed. This is a charge navigated by ProCare. **The current rate is 2.75% added to tuition for these payments.** This percentage is subject to change depending on ProCare's current rate.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees will be charged at the following rate:

- **First offense: \$1 per minute per child**
- **Second offense and thereafter: \$5 per minute per child**

Late pick-up fees will be assessed beginning at 5:30 PM and will be due prior to the child(ren) returning.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Tuition funds our daily operations. If tuition is not paid, we are unable to operate. Therefore, we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact.

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$15 will be added for each day that it is late. If you have a payment arrangement with us and do not meet that arrangement, it will be voided and all tuition will be due Monday for the week of care. If

your account has not been paid in full within 5 business days, your child may be discharged from the program.

If payment is more than 5 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks will be charged a fee of \$30. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in payment for your account being placed online or through money order only.

Additional Fees Credits

- **Vacation** - to retain your child's spot during vacation, 100% of your regular tuition is due. For families enrolled for a year, the family is allotted 5 vacation days at a discounted rate of 50% of the current tuition rate. Vacation days can be used if written notice is given a week in advance for the days the child will not be in attendance. Tuition must be paid prior to going on vacation. These fees are non-refundable if you choose not to return.
- **Withdrawals** - if a child is suddenly withdrawn from the program without a 2 week written notice of withdrawal, a 2 week tuition fee may be applied. Families who withdraw and later re-enroll will be charged a re-enrollment fee.

Credits & No Credits

- **Credit will not be given for Sick Days** – there are no credits for sick days. Sick days are considered in determining tuition and are not refundable.
- **Credit will not be given for Inclement Weather** - if we do not open due to inclement weather on a day that your child is scheduled to attend, your account will not be credited for that day. This is at the discretion of the owner.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:00 AM due to an appointment, please call us at 615-230-8222. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Withdrawals

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in additional fees.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced via the ProCare App.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 5:30 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

All children must be signed in by 9:00 AM. A doctor's note is required to come in after 9:00 AM. Please notify us ahead of time if your child is going to be late due to a doctor's appointment.

We close at 5:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Parking Lot Procedure

When entering or exiting the parking lot, please reduce your speed, as children could be present. The Learning Tree's entrance is located by the mailbox. The exit is located to the left of the building, through the adjacent business's parking lot.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, **The Learning Tree is a no cell phone zone.**

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing via ProCare. You will need to have the person send a picture of their ID to learningtreegallatin@gmail.com and update your contacts in ProCare. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Recurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Toddlers:** wipes, diapers, at least two changes of clothes, tissues, sheet and blanket. Due to licensing rules, pacifier clips, teething necklaces, or other items that could pose a choking or strangulation risk are not permitted.
- **Older Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more if going through the toilet training program, wipes, pull ups, tissues, and a sheet and blanket.
- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes, wipes, tissues, sheet and blanket.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, diapers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name and picture. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located in the front lobby. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

Toys from home are prohibited from coming into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

Food brought from home is prohibited from being brought into the center unless the following conditions apply:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

At meal time the dining table is set with disposable plates and flatware. Everyone sits at the same table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers. Weekly menus are also sent out via ProCare.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Toddler Feedings

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every January, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Fever (above 99.4°F under the arm, above 100.4°F on the forehead) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.

- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours without medication.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

All medications should be handed to the Director with a complete medical form. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a complete medical form. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
Management will give ALL medications.
- **Non-prescription medications** require a complete medical form. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream) do not require a medical form.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We

will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, water, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Children are to wear closed heel and toe shoes only. Sandals, crocs, and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. They are NOT allowed.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 95 °F or less than 32 °F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play will be canceled if the air quality rating is 50 or below. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor play.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury

produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

If the biting behavior continues despite efforts between staff and parents to control the behavior, the child will be released from the center, as per the discretion of The Learning Tree.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited within 50 feet of the center.

Prohibited Substances

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

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

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with alarms, rolling cribs, and safety lights.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a bi-weekly basis.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

After Hour Emergency Contact Information

In the event of an emergency after hours, please contact LeeAnn at 615-491-5265. For non-emergencies, please email us at learningtreegallatin@gmail.com. We will reply within 24 hours. You can also email Lee Ann at leeann@leeannmattox.com.

CENTER POLICIES

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed quarterly and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **The Learning Tree Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **The Learning Tree** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **The Learning Tree Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

Advisors:

- Discussion of Program Goals – annual meeting for families to provide input into our plan for the program.
- Parent Advisory Committee – meets 4 times a year to review progress toward annual goals.

Family Events: We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements!

- Open House
- Back to School Night
- Holiday Gathering
- Book Swap
- Fall Festival
- Annual Family Picnic

Classroom Activities: Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative
- Contribute to class Pot Luck Meal
- Family Teacher conferences

Family/Parent Workshops: Our menu of family workshops changes annually. Below is a list of workshops we typically offer. We try to offer these in the early evening or on Saturdays. See the monthly calendar for scheduled topics. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Safety in the Home
- Child Proofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- How to Prepare for a Conference
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Value of Reading to Your Child
- Everyday Math

2023 Closures:

Below you will find a list of the dates we will be **CLOSED** in **2023**. The state allows for 13 holiday days for the 2023 year.

These are the dates we will be **CLOSED**:

- Monday, January 2 – **New Year’s Day** (state offices will also be closed for New Year’s Eve on Friday, December 30, 2022)
- Monday, January 16 – **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- Friday, March 3 - **Professional Development Day**
- Monday, May 29 – **Memorial Day**
- Tuesday, July 4 – **Independence Day**
- Monday, September 4 – **Labor Day**
- September 25-29 - **Maintenance and Training**
- Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24 – **Thanksgiving***
- Monday, December 25 – **Christmas**
- Friday, December 29 – **New Year’s Eve** (state offices will also be closed for New Year’s Day on Monday, January 1, 2024)

We will be closed the week of September 25 - 29, 2023 for maintenance and training. We will NOT be closed the week after Christmas.